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Author: Rowland Edward Lording, writing as A. Tiveychoc

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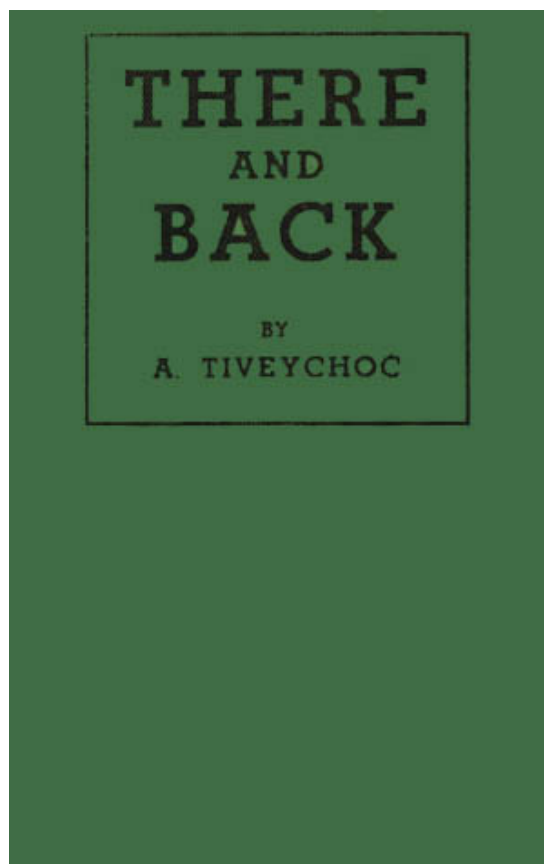
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**There and Back: The Story of an Australian Soldier  
1915-35**

**by**

**Rowland Edward Lording, of the 30th Battalion AIF  
writing as A. Tiveychoc**

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With Forewords by

L A. ROBB, C.M.G., State President, R.S.S.I.L.A., N.S.W.

and

"AN UNKNOWN SOLDIER"

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**Decorations by FRANK DUNNE**

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Published in 1935 by  
Returned Sailors And Soldiers'  
Imperial League Of Australia  
New South Wales Branch

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TO  
MRS O. E. H. B.  
ONE OF THOSE GLORIOUSLY UNSELFISH AND  
LOVING WOMEN OF THE WAR WHO  
BROUGHT A RAY OF SUNSHINE, THE LIGHT OF  
HOPE, UNTO THOSE WAR-SHATTERED

# MINDS GROPING IN THE DARKNESS OF MENTAL TORTURE AND PHYSICAL PAIN

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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

*The author gratefully acknowledges the encouragement  
and help he  
has received from many Digger friends in the writing of  
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"Northern Daily Leader."*

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## **FOREWORD**

by

**L. A. ROBB, C.M.G.,  
State President, R.S.S.I.L.A., N.S.W.**

I could hope that those who have not known war will be privileged to read this really sincere and unvarnished autobiography of a young soldier who, like very many of his boyhood fellows, was cruelly shattered, in war. Something very much more than a plain simple tale this; something more than a wartime autobiography. It breathes a spirit, a faith, and an idealism that used to be—and still is.

A war story, to sadden and to inspire, by one blasted and wrecked in that disaster which was Fromelles in 1916; by one whose optimism has survived uncomprehended tortures since the tide of battle left him stranded, a pathetic fragment of humanity, on the forbidding shores of post-war. A man who is still the light-hearted, fearless boy that used to be, looking back, glad and proud, while not ignoring the tragedy and the futilities, that he was there.

It is a story that, in parts, might perhaps have been written by any one of the 316,000 members of the

Australian Imperial Force who felt that their duty called overseas in 1914-18, could their pens trace the inspiration—convert the inner thought. Here is real atmosphere, so elusive always, and difficult to capture and imprison on the printed page—the atmosphere which only the soldier knew and none other can ever create.

The spirit that was of the famous battalions permeates this book and there is stark reality, humour, and incident that take the memory back down the dimming avenue of the past to vivid, wild, joyous, bitter, tragic years, the axis upon which the thoughts and lives of all ex-service men turn.

Here is also an epic of indomitable courage in the after-war, and of a happy spirit, invincible in torture and suffering that cannot even be imagined by those whose bodies have not been torn and hacked in the ghastliness of war and brought again and again to the operating tables, and who have not waged grim war with the leering, luring, drug fiends.

A soldier's soul is here bared.

L. A. Ross.  
*Sydney,*  
*17 September, 1935.*

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**FOREWORD**  
**by**  
**"AN UNKNOWN SOLDIER"**

Greatly I appreciate having been asked to pen this foreword to *There And Back*, a story which, I am confident, is crowned already with that most difficult distinction, great usefulness. Some outstanding quality must justify any narrative, but, it seems to me, in this one all such qualities are so inextricably mixed that it is impossible to select confidently the impression that stirs one most, for the humorous precocity of the author's initial attempt to enlist is quite overshadowed by an awed comprehension of the lurid dangers into which he was rushing headlong, and the glowing eagerness of his youthful ambition is somehow made pitifully poignant by the cruel price of suffering he was made to pay.

But valour, endurance, and intelligence are the qualities that shine most conspicuously and all unconsciously in these pages, and these things must be an inspiration to every youth who gets this book in his hands. No better trial for manhood could ever be devised than a twelvemonth of service with a wartime battalion of Australian infantry, and the manner in which "Ted" stood this testing, while still only a boy, should strike an inspiring note in the heart of every young man.

Living recklessly, the dangers he faced were tenfold, but the only way a youth can win the admiring confidence of mature men is illuminated here with a clarity unmistakable. The one brief period of strutting and aping at the vices of older men is the clear background against which his sober determination to excel and prosper shows best, and any experienced soldier will instantly descry in him those particular qualities of conduct that were so highly esteemed by Australian fighting troops.

Self-reliance, confidence, and alert service brought him preferment shrewdly bestowed, and ready humour and efficiency retained it.

Any word-monger's easy flowing fancy can capture on dexterous pen the fictitious poses of an ideal hero, but few men can aptly express their own sufferings. The very intensity of this author's agony seeps unknowingly into his words and they sear the heart. Understanding of the awful price in suffering the war made some men pay, should awake anew a watchfulness that the things they held for us are not despised; and a brief comparison of the grim facts in this story with the settled security of our common lives to-day should win an instantaneous sympathy for the author's tale.

While its merits should win a ready praise, it is the humour that flashes in patches of brightness that brings an indescribable stamp of conviction to this narrative, and it builds up a certitude that the writer has told his message in the most fitting way as

The happy warrior...  
Whose high endeavours are an inward light  
That makes the path before him always bright.

And the characters that live with him also are all striking types recognizable anywhere to-day among returned soldiers, and their story moves with a swinging rhythm, a provocative march-time lilt, that must captivate all veterans of the old A.I.F., as, out from the strange confusion of early camp days, the narrative gathers gradually increasing cohesion and momentum in passing over the seas and crossing Egyptian sands, until, like a curving, rushing wave, it bursts at last with a surging shock on those German breastworks at Fromelles.

Ah, what a tragedy was there, when all Australia felt the crushing weight of war's blundering futility. What a realization it was that war was waged by incompetent men as it always is, for war is a peculiarly incompetent activity. So we must now remember it not as a glory, not as a defeat, but as a cruel punishment for the crime of insufficient understanding of the problem of war. We know now that our strong hand methods have failed, the weapons we used destroyed more than we gained, but this we did, we proved that the problem of war is a moral one, that it is a rotten thing based on rottenness, yet a just scourge from which the world is not yet worthy to be free.

"AN UNKNOWN SOLDIER."

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### AUTHOR'S NOTE TO REX

Much water has passed under the bridge since you came on a hurried visit from Tamworth to see me at Randwick Hospital in August, 1932. Though I do not recollect much of what happened, or nearly happened, during the final six weeks of my half-year sojourn there, I do remember your arrival at my bedside as the jolly old Canon concluded his few last words.

Just what he said to help me over the divide I cannot recall, but I am mindful of your suggestion that I should write a book. Maybe you said that in an heroic endeavour to persuade me, during what seemed to you and others to be my last hour, that my life had been worth something to others; or perhaps you thought that, if I did by any chance recover, a little writing to remind myself of the "wickedly" past would keep me quiet for a while.

Well, I tricked the undertaker once again and proceeded to have a fling ere the family returned from Blighty in the ensuing October. After eighteen months of grass-widowship, the process of getting back to domestic paths and taking up the reins to guide the children (still three, in case you are presumptuous) caused me to forget my troubles and recent associations.

My son and heir, aged six, having during his trip abroad witnessed the trooping of the colour, the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace, and a military tattoo, informed me, that he, too, was going to be a soldier. Perceiving with mixed feelings of pride and regret that he was made of the same stuff as his father, and being unable to answer his many questions offhand without prejudicing his youthful mind one way or the other, I remembered your suggestion and resolved to put my experiences on paper.

Here's the manuscript. I am afraid it will offend some people with literary and ethical tastes (the war and its aftermath were a bit coarse in parts), and the credibility of others will at times be somewhat taxed. However, it mirrors myself, as I was and felt, and others as I saw them at the time. It is "dinkum;" and that is why in the narrative I have changed my name, and have also referred to others simply by their Christian names or nicknames in case they, like myself, do not like too much of the limelight of truth. There is another good reason why I have used the name "Ted." It is my second Christian name (Edward)—I was called after my father. Then again I gave it to my eldest son, so being well and truly worn, like myself, it is rather appropriate. Furthermore, it gives the Dad a place in the history of his chip—a doubtful compliment to a most tolerant, forbearing, and sporting father—but a tribute nevertheless. To Mother and Father, their fathers and forefathers, I owe everything for the healthy constitution that has pulled me through, and if I, a chip off such a block, am a bit splintered, well it's of my own making.

In writing this story I have lived much of my life over again—the pain, the humility, the bad, all have their place, if only to give one a better appreciation of the pleasure, the pride and the good. In the passing of the kindly mellowing years one remembers less and less the pain, yet

how easy it is to recall the pleasures that we had. Some of the old diversions are recalled with feelings of some discontent, Fritz and the surgeons having left me my conscience.

I was not in the battle of the Wazir, or at Anzac, or in the Somme mud, or on leave in Blighty. Mine was a very small part, and it must be multiplied many millions of times before one can form any conception of the four years of war in which I saw but nine days in action. My purpose, however, has been to draw a picture of the war and its aftermath as I saw it, lived it, hated it, and loved it at the time. And, in case another war should ever darken the world's horizon, the following pages may do something to enlighten readers with regard to war.

**A. TIVEYCHOC.**

1935

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## CHAPTER I. CHILDHOOD: ABOUT TURN

Comes of British stock—Seeks adventure in a sewer—Learns scripture and deportment—Receives a black eye—Plays truant—Wins a prize—Goes to work—Forgets love and tries to join the army.

(June 1899—June 1915)

Edward Rowland, born of Australian parents at Sydney on the 20th of June 1899, was working in his father's factory when war was declared in 1914. His grandfather of the one side and great-grandfather of the other, descended from British seamen (thought to be pirates) and English countryfolk respectively, had been among the first pioneers to settle in Victoria, where they and their descendants engaged in mining, horticultural, and commercial pursuits. It is therefore not surprising that "Ted," coming from such stock, was of sturdy physique, and was endowed with the spirit of adventure and patriotism.

Ted's brief childhood was sufficiently varied to equip him with at least the fundamental requirements of life. Setting out on an adventure at the age of four, he was some hours later discovered in an open sewer, minus his clothes. Later, after running the gauntlet of pneumonia, scarlet fever, and chicken pox, he was placed at a private school where scripture and deportment were the principal subjects on the curriculum. With his natural instincts somewhat subdued by this environment he entered upon a public school education, and within a week was initiated

into the art of taking knocks—the first resulting in a black eye.

Following on a lengthy truancy from school during which he built a hut in a mangrove swamp and sailed the shark-infested waters of the Parramatta River in a home-made canvas boat, the boy achieved the not unexpected distinction of coming last in the school examination. A conference of father and schoolmaster thereupon resolved that, as chastisement had proved of no avail, they would try other methods. So Ted received a bicycle from his father and was appointed monitor to his master, and he responded by coming third at the subsequent examination in token of which he received the school's prize for progress—*Robinson Crusoe*.

Perhaps the adventures of Crusoe or his own satisfaction in considering that he had proved his ability, or perhaps both, gave Ted sufficient excuse for relaxation, but, whatever the cause, the remainder of his school-days were marked by sporting rather than scholastic achievements. He is probably remembered by his school-mates as captain of the footer team and runner-up in the swimming championship, but most of all for his chronic state of black eyes and occasional victories in fistic combat. As a chorister he led the church choir boys in everything but singing, and it must have been a great relief to the vergier when Ted's voice broke, and he retired from that confraternity.

Much against his parents' wishes, he left school at the age of fourteen and was put to work in his father's business, where he remained—though, after the novelty had worn off, much against his inclination—for the next two years, up to the time of his enlistment in the Australian Imperial Force.

When the exigencies of compulsory military training allowed, he would tour the country on his bicycle in the holidays, carrying his provisions and sleeping out. On one such trip, which occupied three days, he covered 339 miles in a round trip from Sydney, touching at Burragorang, Wombeyan Caves, Goulburn, Moss Vale, Kangaroo Valley, and Nowra. This was no mean feat for a boy of but fourteen summers, who already had to his credit the saving of two lives from drowning.

If, during June or July of 1914, Ted heard anything of the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, it is probable that he promptly forgot it, for at that time his thoughts were mainly centred on a pretty girl who worked in a neighbouring factory. In exchange for penny-dreadfuls and an occasional bunch of violets he was allowed to accompany her as far as, but no farther than, her railway destination, and, as his weekly supply of pocket money was limited, it must be assumed that he booked more than one fare to the then equivalent of "Kitchener."

After the declaration of war his premature springtime fancies turned to thoughts of adventure. Newspapers and military text-books supplanted the penny-dreadfuls, while the scent of violets at least temporarily evaporated. Orators and the sight of so many khaki-clad figures fired his youthful imagination, but his first visit to Victoria Barracks, a suit of overalls covering his short pants, resulted merely in Ted's offer of enlistment being "received" by the sentry at the main gates. It was not until after Christmas of 1914, when he first got into long trousers that he succeeded in even gaining an entry to the Barracks. Taking his place in line with that morning's batch of volunteers he was confronted by a sergeant-major, who did not appear satisfied with the youth's answers concerning his age.

"Know anything about soldiering?" asked the S.M.

"Yes sir," came the ready reply.

"About turn! Quick march! Double!"

Receiving no further command, as he headed for the gate, Ted took the "office."

Though hurt in his pride and feeling wholly dejected, he nevertheless found some consolation in believing that those who predicted the early termination of hostilities might be wrong, and that the war would last more than another six months. So, with the idea of qualifying for the light horse, he saved sufficient money to hire a horse for a week-end, but after the first day's riding found it more comfortable to stand than sit. Next experimenting with a bugle, he had almost perfected the "Cook-house Door"

when the patriotic patience of the neighbours petered out, and in silence he sounded "Retreat."

By the time when the news of the landing at Gallipoli arrived, Ted's frequent calls at the Barracks had led to a distant sparring acquaintance between him and the sergeant-major. But, except for his new-found interest in compulsory military training and the recent attainment of the rank of signal-corporal in the Senior Cadets, and three evenings of each week—when he was supposed to be at night school—in the company of a Boer War veteran turned night watchman, the time dragged wearily on to June.



## CHAPTER II. STANDING EASY

A 16th birthday present—A successful cough—  
A tail of a shirt—A Liverpool Marmalade—A  
camp concert and a night without pyjamas.

(June—July 1915)

Sunday, 20 June 1915, was Ted's sixteenth birthday. His parents, fearful lest he should run away from home and join up under an assumed name in another State, compromised by giving their consent to his enlistment conditional upon his entering the signalling corps. It was their fond belief that the training for this unit would take at least twelve months, by which time the war might be over; and it is just possible also that they considered that army discipline might bring the boy's spirit under control.

With the ink hardly dry on this document—his most cherished birthday present—Ted again confronted his friend the sergeant-major.

"What! You bloody well here again?"

"Yes, have a look at this," said Ted, producing his parents' consent.

"What's your age?"

"Eighteen, sir."

"Stand easy."

Which he did with the utmost satisfaction in having, at last, settled his differences with the jolly old sergeant-major.

The rest was easy, being not at all unfamiliar to one who had received "inside" information from many who had been through the preliminaries. Particulars as to full name, date and place of birth, colour of eyes, hair and complexion, weight, and height, were duly recorded, and parental consent noted by a clerk in the recruiting office; and Ted, having expanded his chest, shown feet, said ninety-nine and coughed successfully, was ordered to report at the barracks on Monday, 19 July, ready for camp.

Though elated with this initial success he was conscious of yet a few more difficulties to be overcome. For example, he was a trainee under the compulsory service act, and the issue of a summons as the result of his absence from future parades would of course lead to the discovery of his enlistment in the A.I.F. under the prescribed age. But this was "fixed up" after a friendly talk with his Area Officer, to whom he gave an undertaking to attend as many parades as possible prior to embarking for service overseas.

Then there was the question of his military shirt. Compulsory trainees over eighteen years of age were in the militia and had on their shirts shoulder straps, which were not included on those of the senior cadets. So if Ted's cadet shirt was to be worn to camp it became necessary to make the required addition. A friend apprenticed in

tailoring adjusted this matter by making shoulder straps out of material cut from the tail of the garment.

Monday, 19 July 1915, was ushered in with rain. This might have been taken as a bad omen—as events turned out, on the very first anniversary of his signing on for "three years or the duration," Fritz and fate in the Battle of Fromelles extended this period for life. But this was not a day to sit in the shadows of coming events. Rising from his bed after a sleepless night, Ted hurriedly bathed and, dressing in his slightly remodelled cadet uniform, sat down to the family breakfast. What with the incessant questioning of his younger brothers and sisters, the thoughtful silence of Mother and Dad, and his own pent-up feelings, it was with the greatest difficulty that he contrived to be outwardly calm and inwardly fed.

Breakfast over, the youth strapped up his valise and, with a lump—or was it breakfast—in his throat, grinned and said good-bye. Hearing but not remembering the words of parting, seeing without looking back, feeling kiss and handshake still with him, he set forth on the long adventure. On the train he chewed rather than smoked a cigarette, and, after a fit of coughing, received lengthy abuse from an old lady who threatened him with her gamp for being in a non-smoker. Blushing freely he came back to earth, and by the time the train reached Sydney was thinking of the day ahead.

On arrival at Victoria Barracks Ted sought out his old friend the sergeant-major, but if he expected a welcome home he was disappointed, for that gentleman merely ordered him to "wait." Wait! Why, the S.M. knew that Ted had already experienced eleven months of waiting, but perhaps after all, he used the word by way of recognition.

As the recruits arrived they gathered in groups and, the muster being a particularly large one, it seemed that all walks of life were represented. Ted attached himself to the group attired mostly in various cuts of khaki, and was agreeably surprised to find an old school chum, "Dab," some two years his senior. This group listened attentively for a while to the experiences of a New Guinea veteran, and was in the midst of a round of smutty yarns, when without the ceremony of a bugle call the order was given to "Fall in!"

Stepping out and re-forming lines in order of the roll-call effectively split up the groups, and, after numbering, the form-fours shuffle brought Ted in between a seaman and a chap with a bowler hat. As the column marched out of the barracks and Ted passed the sergeant-major, he could not resist a final word.

"So long, Major!"

"So long my boy, good luck!"

The recruits, receiving an occasional cheer as they swung along the road, were conscious of their motley appearance, and it was not until tramping through Surry Hills, when someone produced a mouth-organ, that they found their spirits. Some singing, some laughing, and others cursing the march, they arrived at Central Station and heartily cheered the engine for its whistle of cock-a-doodle-do. Entrained, the starting whistle was the signal for another wild outburst of cheering, which was repeated at each of the first few stations through which the train passed, and then the company settled down. Ted, who had taken a part, though not a leading one, in the cheering, accepted a dainty sandwich from his companion of the bowler hat and, after a gulp from another's bottle of beer, did the honours with cigarettes.

Detraining at Liverpool and crossing the river bridge they entered camp and were greeted by some thousands of their predecessors, who lined the lane-way between the huts and loudly jeered "Marmalades! "—signifying initiation to a camp where marmalade constituted the staple food.

The ceremony of attestation—taking the oath of allegiance, with the Bible grasped in the right hand—reminded Ted of the seriousness of his undertaking, but still uppermost in his mind was the fear of his age being found out. The rest of the afternoon was spent in getting established. Divided into squads they were marched to the quartermaster's store, where each was issued with blankets, dungarees, white hat, boots, socks, flannel shirts, tin plate, knife, fork and spoon. On returning there was a wild scramble for empty palliasses and straw, which had been dumped in the middle of the hut. Though some succeeded in getting palliasses and others had equal

success with the straw, Ted, in spite of a good deal of rough handling, was one of the few who got both.

At the final parade of the day, after the orderlies for the morrow had been detailed it was intimated that although no leave would be granted that night, the troops were free to wander within the limits of the camp until 9.30, when they must be in the hut to answer roll call. At 10 o'clock, lights were to be put out. The parade was then dismissed, though not before several unsuccessful attempts had been made to carry out the order.

The evening meal—bread and marmalade, with a pannikin of sweet, black tea—being hurriedly taken, Ted and Dab set out on a tour of inspection. After viewing a cook-house and inspecting the guard, they had a look at the river and discussed it as an avenue for taking French leave, bought some cigarettes and lollies at the canteen and then finished up at the Y.M.C.A. tent where an impromptu concert was in progress. A song about a little grey home in the west was followed by a cornet solo; a humorous recitation was then given a good hearing, but a well-rendered classic on the piano was soon counted out and the concert resolved itself into chorus singing.

Less than the full number put in an appearance at roll-call, but as a reply—in some cases more than one—was received to each name called, it was let go at that. Except for some good-natured chaffing of those who produced pyjamas (Ted left his in his valise), there was comparative quiet for the half-hour preceding "lights out," all being more or less engaged in making preparations for turning in. This, however, was but the lull before the storm.

The scene that followed lights out began with an organized raid, some twenty toughs grabbing the ends of palliasses and pulling them from under their owners, who at first dealt out blows at random and then joined in the raid themselves. It was no time before the whole hut was in a state of turmoil, and more than one suffered as the light-fingered took advantage of the darkness. When a lull occurred in the yelling, shouting, and swearing, the hut sergeant threatened to bring in the guard, but he was promptly told what he could do. He thereupon retired, and the mob sorted itself out and subsided.



Taking stock with the aid of matches, Ted found that, apart from having fallen into the filthy mess of someone's vomit, he had not come out of the raid badly. He had managed to secure a well-filled palliasse in lieu of his own, and had lost only his issue knife, which he determined to replace in the morning.

Indelicate remarks—mostly crude, though occasionally witty—now bandied back and forth, were signals for renewed laughter and rebukes, which, though subdued, were sufficiently effective to keep all hands awake. It was well after one o'clock before peace and quiet, except for a few coughs and snores, reigned in the hut. Reviewing the events of the day, Ted's mind at first dwelt in shame on some of the unpleasant episodes and his minor parts in them, but it was not long ere his thoughts wandered back to the haven of home and in its blessing he found sleep.



### CHAPTER III. MARKING TIME

Physical jerks and china dogs—A brief command—A returning leave train—Assuming manhood—A sergeant's medicine and duty—Beer and breath lollies—A father's advice—A trip to Melbourne and back to the 30th Battalion.

(July—August 1915)

Awakening with reveille and hurriedly dressing to the skirl of Scotch pipers whose job it was to rouse the camp, Ted was one of the few ready to fall in for physical jerks parade. When at last the late-comers had fallen into line

and the sergeant had abused all and sundry, he went into further fits of abuse as he endeavoured to put them through numbering, separating odd from even numbers, and opening ranks. Being sufficiently familiar with the exercises—bending backward, forward and to the sides, bending arms and legs and turning head left and right—Ted had time to concentrate on and marvel at the instructor's versatility. He was picked out and ordered to the front as a good example, but was sent back to the ranks on bursting into laughter when the sergeant suddenly exploded: "Gawd a'Mighty, yer as stiff and slow as a lot of china dogs."

All signs of stiffness however, vanished when the squad was dismissed and the orderlies arrived with breakfast. Had all hands been trained in athletics they could not have been more active in their rush on the dixies.

Ted's khaki shirt, on account of the piece missing from the tail, already had earned him the name of "Freezer;" but it was also apparently responsible for his being detailed to take charge of a squad. And had he adhered to text-book regulations instead of trying to emulate the pomposity of the sergeant who conducted the physical culture parade, he probably would have been made a corporal. At first the members of his squad were bewildered and then indignant at having a kid in charge of them, but resentment turned to amusement and culminated in a wild outburst of laughter, when he stood them at ease and addressed them in the regular sergeant-major style thus:

"Once upon a time when I was a little boy I had a box of wooden soldiers. I loved my wooden soldiers and became more and more attached to them as time went on. Then came a day when we moved away and the wooden soldiers were lost. I cried and cried; and my mother said, 'Never mind, my boy, your soldiers will all come back some day'—and now by cripes they have."

Unknown to Ted, the sergeant was standing behind him as he related this story. After joining in the laughter, the N.C.O. made use of a hefty boot and so it was that Ted, much to his satisfaction yet physical discomfort, was relieved of his short-lived command.

To those with previous experience of military training the elementary stages of drill were most uninteresting, but Ted's sense of humour saved him and he found much amusement in seeing and hearing the awkward recruits being put through their paces.

That night he was given leave. Not waiting for tea he hurried off to the station, his valise containing pyjamas and other articles as did not become a private soldier. Feeling about a foot taller on arrival home, he did justice to his dinner, told Mother and Dad all about the nice chaps he knew in camp, and said that the sergeant was a little bit "rough" but was going to get him into the signallers; and after supper, when he had convinced Mother that it was against orders to wear pyjamas in camp, invited the family to visit him the following Sunday. Then, with a bag of home-made cakes under his arm and head full of advice, he hurried off for the train.

The returning leave train with its mixed freight of humans caused Ted, when trying to sleep that night, to ponder on the strange ways of men. The great majority in that train were of course decent fellows, and they attracted little notice; as usual, it was those in various stages of drunkenness—sleeping, laughing, cursing, crying, vomiting, fighting or arguing—or with immoral women, who gave the superficial observer a disjointed and wrong perspective of life.

Like most others and particularly the younger men, Ted soon acquired the habit of evincing a coarseness of manner, which, though at times causing him to feel inwardly ashamed, served him as a means to outwardly establish and demonstrate his manhood. Adapting himself to all phases of this new life, two weeks' training hardened him to soldiering. He growled with the others about the food, complained with them about the drill, and helped to plan revenge on the sergeant for not allowing regulation rests on the route marches.

Some few miles out on a march one day the sergeant, who for about a mile, had shown signs of discomfort, called a halt. It transpired that someone had put caustic soda in his boots, and so, after placing Ted in charge, he returned to camp. When he disappeared from sight, the troops, without waiting for an order, ambled down to the river

with Ted bringing up the rear, and there enjoyed a quiet hour before returning to camp. Whether or not the medical officer diagnosed the sergeant's complaint is not known, but the events of the next day seemed to indicate that he had ordered m. (medicine)—in the shape of a number nine pill—and d. (duty), which, much to the discomfort of the troops, the sergeant carried out with callousness and determination.

After a fortnight's training—during which there flew around many wild rumours known as "latrine wirelasses," and later "furphies," (Furphy being the name of the sanitary contractor at Broadmeadows Camp, Victoria)—the destiny of Ted's "mob" was determined, through its being classified as "C" Company, 30th Battalion. Leaving their palliasses and the much disliked sergeant behind, they now took up residence in a bell-tent encampment farther along the river bank. To be posted to an original unit was the ambition of most recruits; and, although living in tents meant still more congestion and discomfort, it was regarded, at least by Ted, as being more soldier-like. That night he was detailed for the guard, and was looking forward to the experience; but, happening to be the only one to fall-in in a khaki rig-out—the others were still obliged to wear the blue dungarees that had been issued to them at the outset—he was accordingly dismissed from the parade.

A few days later Ted was selected, with others, to attend a signalling school in Melbourne. Much to the envy of those staying behind, they were marched to the Quartermaster's Store and issued with uniforms, numerals, badges and kit-bags. This occurred on a Saturday afternoon, and they were to leave for the south on the following day.

Ted hurried home, dressed in full uniform and carrying his kit-bag. As he walked from his home-station he was very proud of himself and felt that everyone was looking at him, as indeed they were, though probably thinking more of his youthful than his soldierly appearance. Of course he simply *had* to call and have a pint at the hotel where a week ago he had been refused a drink for being under age. Then, after visiting a few shopkeepers for the sole purpose of answering their anticipated questions as to when he was going away, he bought some breath-lollies and arrived home.

What might possibly have been his last day at home—for the latest "furphy" had it that they would embark from Melbourne—was by no means a happy experience. His brothers and sisters were quiet and Mother and Dad were most serious. Ted had a feeling that they might alter their minds and not allow him to go away. While at odd moments' they did give thought to taking such action, their patriotism and feeling of pride in their son would not allow them to go back on their word.

The silence of father and son sitting side by side looking into the glowing coals of the evening fire was at last broken when the former, overcoming his restraint, warned his son of the many pitfalls of life and particularly those of a sexual nature. When the time came for him to return to camp, Ted assured his family that, although he would be back from Melbourne in a few weeks, he would write to them often; and he made the parting as brief as possible.

That night it was a most thoughtful lad who, after making a hole in the ground for his hip, and placing a waterproof sheet under him, rolled up in his blankets and tried in vain to sleep.

Next day the lad's father visited him in camp and they talked of anything and everything except the subjects of the previous evening, which made Ted feel glad. He introduced Dad to his pals and they all gave good reports. One of the company—the father of an old school chum of Ted, and now affectionately called "Dad" by all the boys—gave an undertaking that he would keep an eye on the lad. This offer was resented by Ted, but much appreciated by his father.

There was a big crowd to see them off from the Central Station at Sydney that night. After the train started, Ted found little chance of thinking or looking back, for a company of Queenslanders, already past the farewell stage, kicked up Hell's own row and caused trouble all the way to Melbourne.

On arrival in Melbourne they marched over Prince's Bridge to the signalling school in the Domain. Obtaining leave, Ted visited his uncle at Moonee Ponds, and returned to camp to find the rain coming through the

flyless square tent and his cream blankets covered with mud. That night he wrote home a letter in which he said that he was well and was having a good time; but refrained from mentioning how one of the Queenslanders climbed through a window and scrambled along to another compartment, while the train was going, or of the smashing of windows and window bars on the Victorian train, though he did say something of a fight at Seymour.

It turned out that there had been some mistake in sending them to Melbourne, so, like the Grand Old Duke of York's men who marched up the hill and then marched down again, they arrived back in Sydney after spending only one night in Melbourne. Looking very weary and showing signs of a merry night's journey, they were marched to Victoria Barracks, given lunch at a cheap eating-house in Paddington, and returned to Liverpool, to be posted to headquarters signallers, 30th Battalion.



## CHAPTER IV. THE HEADS AND THE BOYS

Once a man always a man—Finding's keepings—  
—A letter home—The battalion moves—Its  
colonel, his batman and others—A march  
through Sydney—A fair question—Sundry  
signallers—A crime and a visit to Hell—Barney  
and Mrs I-ti—A skating civvie and a bandy  
batman.

(August—November 1915)

Ted soon found his cadet-gained knowledge of signalling to be very elementary, yet his experience in Morse and

semaphore "flag-wagging" was a good foundation for the more advanced training.

He liked the sham stunts in which three signallers would be sent out to man each visual signalling station. Sent out one day with Jim J. in charge, and another signaller who, like Jim, was ever ready to make way for youth when there was work to be done, Ted had had about two hours' continuous flag-wagging when he received the welcome message "emma-emma-esses" (M.M.S.)—meaning, "men may smoke." Ted was about to light up when Jim said, "Did that message say anything about boys may smoke."

"No—why?"

"Well, put your fag out."

Jim was promptly told to go to hell, but, being a good fellow and always too tired to exert himself, just rolled over and went to sleep.

An expert telegraphist, Jim considered that his effort towards winning the war would be confined to his skilled calling, so, except for taking part in route marches and in the general routine, he was never known to work. He would come back merry from leave and call out, "I've had two flounders, four bob each, and now I am going to assert my prerogative. If there's a man amongst you let him announce himself." One night someone did, but Jim only put out his hand and said, "Well I'm (hic) glad to meet you; once a man (hic) always a man (hic)—'ave a drink."

It was about this time that Alan L. ("Rubberneck") joined up with the signallers. Detailed to Ted's tent, he could not understand why all but one, Vic C., slept on one side of the tent. "This'll do me," he said as he dumped his gear down alongside Vic, but, having been kept awake all night with Vic's snoring, he woke up to the idea. Vic was the grand champion of snorers, and even a half-open box of matches lighted on his nose failed to cure him.

Tom H., the corporal signaller, was also an occupant of this tent. He took great pride in his hair and was most careful of his personal appearance and effects. One Sunday, after leaving camp with a lady friend whom he was taking to Sydney, he returned hurriedly from

Liverpool station looking the picture of misery. During his absence Ted had found a pound note in the lines and, saying "finding's keepings," had promptly visited the canteen and also paid a deposit on his photograph. He was enjoying a good feed when he was surprised to see Tom come back.

"What's up, Tom, had a row?"

"No, I've lost a quid."

"Struth! Tom, that's bad luck. Have a piece of cake?"

Bronchitis and meningitis were very prevalent at the camp at this time, and Ted contracted the former complaint. The sergeant, going on week-end leave, allowed Ted to sleep on his stretcher in the store tent, and it was from there that Ted wrote home the following letter:

*DEAR MOTHER AND DAD,*

*I am unable to come home this week-end as I have a bit of a cold. It is nothing much, so don't worry. I am sleeping in the sergeant's real bed in the store tent and will be well enough to go on parade to-morrow.*

*My bed faces the tent opening and I can see all the funerals that go along the road from the hospital. The band plays the "Dead March" with the drums muffled in black and the soldiers march with reversed arms. They go by very slowly and the music makes me feel as though I am in the funeral—I don't mean in the box. I suppose in time we will get used to such sights.*

*Toc R., the O.C.'s batman, went on leave to the country, and I am supposed to take his place. I don't like the idea of being a servant and cleaning boots, but suppose I'll have to do as I am told. You should have seen Toc going on leave. He had infantry breeches, light horse leggings and spurs he called 'ooks, a coloured artillery sig.'s badge and two stripes on his arm, signal corps badges on his shoulders, crossed flags in front of his cap, a white naval lanyard sticking out of his pocket and rolled overcoat across his chest, carrying a basket hold-all, signalling*



*flags, riding' whip and umbrella, and leading Tiny, our dog mascot, on a piece of rope that kept getting tangled around his bandy legs. Toc has flat feet, and Jack F. says he is built for trench warfare.*

*I have had my photo taken and will send you one with this letter. I will try and get leave on Thursday night and will come home to dinner, and I would like you to make some sausage-rolls for me to bring back to camp.*

It is feared that Ted took good care to be a failure as a batman. The light duties of this office, cleaning boots, polishing leather and metal, making the bed, bringing shaving water, cleaning up and folding up were more or less welcomed as a period of convalescence, but both he and the O.C. rejoiced when Toc came back to camp complete but for his umbrella.

During the month of September the battalion was transferred from Liverpool to the Royal Agricultural Showground in Sydney. The change was greatly appreciated by all ranks, for it brought the city within easy distance of the camp. The made roads and grassy training areas of the adjacent Moore Park were a decided change after the sticky, oozing mud or thickly flying dust of Liverpool. By this time, as a result of the training, and the issue of uniforms and equipment, and of horses for the senior officers, the mob had been converted into something approaching the appearance and standard of an infantry battalion.

The 30th had for its colonel a tall and, but for a moustache, most unwarlike-looking man with a highly pitched voice, who sported a shrill pea-whistle. He lived with his bulldog in the show-ground glass-house, and had for a batman an Englishman named Silvertail. This man's name, when called by the colonel, was music in itself. It was "Silvertail, Silvertail, how many more times am I to tell you *not* to wrap my pyjamas in a wet towel?" Also "Silvertail, I like my toast done a nice golden brown;" and, later, in France, "Silvertail, there's a beastie on my singlet, take it away from me, Silvertail, take it away!" But for all that, as the real test of soldiering later proved, the colonel was a great soldier; and it is doubtful if there was ever a more efficient batman than his Silvertail.

Next in command was Major H., a thick-set, dinkum-looking major with a florid complexion and suitable deep voice for giving military commands, as well as expressive colour to his Aussie vocabulary. He differed from the C.O. in every audible and apparent respect, even to the shade of his khaki and the leather polish he used. Later he was given command of another battalion.

With the leaders' contrasting qualities of ruggedness and blandness more or less serving to compensate each other, the H.Q. of the battalion also had an adjutant, one Captain S. A regular soldier, senior in age and military experience, he gave balance to the command and sympathetic understanding to those commanded. Affectionately known as "Tod," his pecuniary lavishness recouped more than one digger's loss at two-up, and at other times provided the wherewithal for sight-seeing and various kinds of recreation in Cairo and other pleasure resorts.

The battalion was divided into four companies, which in turn were divided into four platoons each of four sections. Each company and platoon had its O.C., and each O.C. had his peculiarities and eccentricities. For instance, there was Major B. of A Company, a crack rifle-shot, and known as "Cock Robin" for the one and only song he gave at each battalion concert. Though at one time he had a company of Queenslanders who proved as impossible for him to manage as did their two mascot monkeys, his command now for the most part comprised Victorian naval men from Williamstown. This change of personnel he welcomed, but he found some difficulty in converting them from naval to military practice. On one occasion Sergeant Tosch reported as to so many being "aboard sir," the number "ashore sir," and the names of those "adrift sir"—which, interpreted with the retention of but one "sir," turned out to be a report on the number in camp, on leave, and absent without leave (A.W.L.).

In accordance with "establishments," the battalion absorbed transport, machine-gun, and signalling sections, as well as a band which, under the leadership of Sergeant Les W., had by this time gained the reputation of being the best of its kind in Australia. The 30th was thus as complete and evenly balanced as its brief history and available equipment would permit.

The battalion's 1st Reinforcements joined the unit at the showground. "Come on, brighten up and sing a song," said their O.C. (Lieutenant Mac) when they were straggling along on a march. The boys accordingly struck up "We'll Hang Old Macfarlane on the Sour Apple Tree"—and that was the last time he called on them to sing.

To celebrate and demonstrate its advent, the battalion, wearing the latest type of equipment, made of green leather, and with its accoutrements highly polished, marched through the streets of Sydney. With the signal section leading, we fall into step with Ted and share with him the countless thrills that travel up and down his straight and youthful spine to the accompaniment of inspiring martial music from the band.

By the time the marching column reached King Street Ted felt as though he were walking on air. As it wheeled into George Street, the sight of a girl falling from one of the top windows of a store through the awning to the pavement below momentarily prompted him to break from the ranks and run to her assistance. But though he felt that as a participant in the march he was in some way responsible for the accident, he carried on, and was brought back to his bearings when an acquaintance on the sidewalk in Martin Place advised him that he was the only one in step.

Stanley E., the youthful lieutenant in charge of the signallers, was pinched in countenance and full of military theory; but, despite his swanky little ways and schoolmaster attitude, was a likeable chap. Instead of calling the members of his section boys and treating them as men, he addressed them as men and tried to manage them as school children. Military training and school teaching were to him synonymous terms, and Sam C., a Cambridge University graduate, took much delight in subjecting his newly found tutor to humiliating ridicule.

Stanley took great pains to instil into his men that they were the eyes and ears of the battalion, and, impressing upon them the necessity of being observant in all things, he invited questions on their observations. At one such question time Sam sought some information.

"Sir," he said, "for some time I have been giving my utmost concentration to a question not only of wide

interest, but, might I say, of vital importance to the battalion in regard to the holding together of its command. With all the intelligence and power of observation that I, like my fellow signallers, have acquired from your teachings, sir, I regret to say that my research in the subject has, owing to my humble status as a private, been restricted, and I am unable to proceed to a definite determination of the final phase. And now, sir, I respectfully seek your aid and enlightenment, since you, as a commissioned officer of His Majesty the King, and commanding officer of this intelligence wing of our unit, are more favourably privileged to observe the finer points of the subject, which to my mind is the mainstay of the battalion command. Could you tell me, sir, if it is B.D. or D.V. corsets the Colonel wears?"

When the laughter subsided Sam came in for severe reprimand and, when the class was dismissed, he was given twenty alphabets to send by Morse flag. Ted received similar punishment for being the most outstanding with his laughter.

Sam, who liked to demonstrate his superior learning, wore underneath the collar of his tunic a stiff white collar, the feeling of which probably served to keep him from sinking into the uncouth habits of a soldier. But at times he would get a little bit rough and argumentative under the influence of higher class drinks, which he was careful to talk of for fear one might presume he had been partaking of common beer.

The signal section—excluding its sergeant and Toc R., the O.C.'s batman—comprised twenty-three men. With three signallers of the 1st Reinforcements, they were billeted in what had been a furniture showroom, which was like a home away from home, though without palliasses the floor was something of a disadvantage. The front opened on to a veranda where a trestle table served for taking meals, as well as for buzzer practice and card games. It was not until the night before leaving these premises that the erstwhile tenants discovered that gas was still connected to a meter in the room, and, when the main pipe was lit, the resultant five-foot flame served as a farewell beacon.

B., otherwise "Perlmutter," whose Yiddish cobbler, Albert G., was called "Potash," slept on a locker in one corner of the bare room. One night, after they had returned from leave partly under the influence and given an acrobatic display in the nude among the rafters, Perlmutter sat fair in a bucket of water which had been purposely placed on his locker.

Rex, Reg, and Peter were the reinforcement signallers, and, as such, were looked upon by the originals as being below their standard. This view had no real foundation, for the length of service of these three was equal to that of the others, except Jack F. and Tom H., who had seen "active" service in New Guinea. (Those two, by the way, were wont to tell of the special service medal that was going to be struck for that campaign.) It is doubtful, however, if the reinforcement signallers ever felt any inferiority in their position. They were morally, socially, and generally in accord with each other, and, being so admirably suited, had no occasion to consider this other "secondary" status. The foundation of their friendship was, despite some difference in religious creeds, based on their code of moral ethics. That they did not adopt an attitude of aloofness, but joined in the collective amusements of the section was an influence for their good as well as for that of the others. It tended to broaden their outlook while at the same time rounding off the rough corners of others, for, if army life taught anything, it taught tolerance of the ways of men.

Other signaller friendships were for the most part based on some mutual characteristic or interest, yet the friendship of Eric W. and Bill M. was at first hard to understand. The former was a parson's son whose main interests lay in the direction of eating, sketching and photography, while of Bill it was said that he was writing a correspondence language course for bullock drivers; but each soon became an apt pupil of the other and they were almost inseparable.

Jim J. and Eric S., apart from being telegraphists by profession, were also united in their ideas of recreation, and in the art of elbow-bending they were about equal. Vic W. and Vic C., with names if nothing else in common, were also members of the "bar," as were Potash and Perlmutter and, later, Eric W. and Bill M. Alan L. (of

furphy fame) was intelligence officer of the froth-blowers' circle, while Barney K., an ex-lightweight champion of the navy, was chief chucker-out and music maker.

Intellectual superiority and its finer tastes for both humour and edibles brought Sam C. and Dud C. to a state of perfect friendship, towards which Tom H. was ambitiously attracted and admitted on account of his somewhat polished mode of speech. On their returning to camp one evening Ted invited them to join him in his supper of fish and chips and beer, and was severely crushed by Sam's reply—"Fish and chips! Why we have just dined at Paris House!"

C.C. being the code letters for the word "cipher" in the signalling service, it was but natural that C.C.S. would be nicknamed accordingly. Cipher was of an inventive turn of mind, and at the time of his enlistment was in the midst of inventing some patent kind of headlight that would automatically project round corners. Jack G., an "umteenth" marine engineer, whose neat appearance was his outstanding social qualification, proved a suitable mate for Cipher. There was in the section another Jack G. who, having been a senior clerk to Stan (the O.C.) in a shipping office, apparently felt he had to keep up the dignity of his late position by playing a lone hand.

Other members of the section included Ron C., a close friend of the reinforcement signallers, yet even more adaptable than they were to the social requirements of soldiering. He shared with Ted the distinction of having a tunic embellished with officers' embossed oxidized metal buttons, and was the owner of a safety razor which Ted, receiving it as a parting gift, had exchanged with him for ready cash. Then there was Reg H., whose twin brother was on Gallipoli. Reg was another of the signallers' saints, and, when provoked in excited argument, as was frequently the case, because he was a good "bite," the only wickedness he was ever known to utter was "Ah, me tit!" Bob T., according to the nautical experiences he was ever ready to relate, was evidently born at sea, where he must have lived for about eighty years to have travelled so far and wide. Jim S. found pleasure in everything but shaving, though he had a kit of six or more razors with which to attack his wire-like growth; he was, without exception, the most obliging and unselfish one of the

crowd. Wal C. was unequalled for his dryness of humour and his running capabilities, a most happy combination which was to serve him well in France. What Mac M., a ginger-headed Scotchman, lacked in humour he made up for in honesty; some ten years after the war, he went to no end of trouble to locate one of his Digger creditors with whom he insisted on settling a ten-bob debt. In 1915, however, Ted was in Mac's black books for having helped himself to the latter's gold-tipped cigarettes.

Ted had so far made no particular friend in the section, being evidently satisfied to be one of the company and on good terms with them all. His youth no doubt excluded his being welcomed into the froth-blowing circle of the hard heads; and, as the company of the wise heads would have cramped his style and made his youth more apparent to himself, if not others, he—well, just carried on.

One morning Ted was carrying on at the top of his voice, abusing all and sundry, when Major H. came in hearing, and promptly crimed him for using bad language. Ted was sorely tried all that day, and, though he came in for a good deal of chaffing from his cobbers, refrained from repeating anything of his morning address. Some told him that he would be given No. 1 field punishment and lose at least twenty-one days' pay, others that he would be "shot at dawn." He found that night to be a very long one. The hard boards on which he continually turned in trying to get to sleep were harder than ever before, and when at last he did go off, it was only to dream of even worse punishment than had been predicted by his mates. After he had faced the firing squad and received its issue of lead, his subconscious mind—taking a different course from that of most dreams—went travelling on through hell, where the devil took the form of the major who was gladly assisted in his tortures by all the signallers, and to make matters worse, he had been struck dumb. After ages and ages of continuous torture and just when he felt that he was about to die again, he heard the sound of Gabriel's trumpet, and awakening in a cold sweat, he found voice to curse the long drawn out blast of Lofty B.'s trombone in the adjoining shed.

Before the time arrived for orderly room parade, Ted paid an unofficial call on the major, who was then dressing and had evidently enjoyed a better night's rest than the lad,

for, after receiving an apology and advising him to refrain from using such terms of "endearment," he withdrew the crime sheet. Ted, feeling that officers were not such inhuman creatures as he had previously imagined them to be, thereupon enjoyed a good breakfast and took added interest in the work of the day.

That night he and other signallers went to the Union Jack Club at Petersham. The club was run by a number of patriotic young girls, whose sole object was to entertain anything filling a khaki or naval uniform, and to send white feathers to those males who preferred civilian dress. They gave freely of lemonade, cakes, sweets, and kisses, and otherwise entertained with music, dancing, and games. In return, they were entertained by the troops, of whom Barney K. was their favourite with his sailor ditties, particularly the one that went "I-tiddle-i-ti, one for Mrs I-ti, slap her in the other eye," and so on. Barney, sitting on the floor among a bevy of pretty girls joining him in song, laughed and joked and sang with the same assurance that he had employed all the way out in the tram when not otherwise engaged in argument with the conductor over the troops' refusal to pay fares. "Book it up to Kitchener," he would say, and would then go on with "Farmer Brown, 'e 'ad a little farm, down on the E.I.O."

The roller skating rink at the Showground, opening as it did on to the street and into the ground, provided a good avenue for those taking and returning from French leave. It also afforded plenty of opportunity to those who liked this form of thrilling recreation, and furnished a handy, though in some cases last, meeting-place with members of the opposite sex. A flash civilian, expert in the art of skating, took much delight in upsetting the equilibrium of the troops not so skilled as himself. Ted suffered several falls in this fashion, and waited three successive nights before squaring the account, almost breaking the civvie's neck. Barney's challenge to a duel with or without skates was not accepted by the civvie, nor was the floor of the rink afterwards graced by his presence.

At this time the daily routine of the signallers commenced with physical training, a break for toilet, breakfast, and dressing for parade. Afterwards they would assemble with the rest of the battalion on the ground at the rear of the skating rink, where Major H.'s deep bass would bring the



parade to order and he would hand it over to the colonel, who with the aid of his pea-whistle made himself promptly understood, despite his highly pitched voice which gave much amusement to the troops. The battalion would then get under way in its daily march to the foot of Mount Rennie, led by the band playing its regimental march.

At Mount Rennie the battalion split up for either company or platoon drill, while the band returned to camp to practise and the signallers got on with their visual training, which sometimes took the form of all-day stunts and resulted in their being spread out over the landscape as far as the sand-hills of Botany. They also had Morse buzzer practice and theory training, as well as instruction in infantry manoeuvres and rifle drill.

One day when both the O.C. and the sergeant were away, Toc R. led the signallers at the head of the battalion, as he was the proud possessor of two stripes to which, by the way, he was not entitled. Toc the batman had not previously been on a parade with *the* 30th, and, had not the colonel been immediately behind the signallers when Toc performed a fancy evolution with his signalling flag as he wheeled into the street, the boys would have all burst into laughter. Toc's left wheel resembled a tramwayman on point duty eurhythmically posing as Mercury in search of somewhere to go, and no doubt he was glad when his bandy legs and flat feet eventually got him there.

When the battalion made arrangements to stage a military tattoo, the signallers, because they were supposed to know something about telephone wires, were given the job of erecting electric-light poles in the show-ring, and for some years after the war these stood as the only visible monument to their existence as a unit.

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## CHAPTER V. A SHIP SAILS

Final leave—A village party—The last night—Embarkation—Cheers, shrieks and streamers—The Governor-General's furphy—The Heads and a first cigar.

(November 1915)

So congenial was the Showground camp, the spring weather, and conditions of training interspersed with liberal leave, that the two months preceding embarkation passed quickly, and during the last few weeks of that period the troops went on final leave in relays.

Ted, now a sun-tanned youth of five-feet-six and weighing ten stone two, was in perfect condition, and in his khaki uniform looked ready for the feast of Mars. His final leave was spent at home, visiting and being visited by friends and relations the majority of whom bored him stiff with their patronage and well-meant words of advice. They all said how brave he was and how well he looked; some asked him to kill a Turk for them, but most wanted the life of some sausage-eating, barbarous German. All said much the same things concerning his welfare welfare and safe return to Australia, and asked him to write often and tell them about the war. Then a final "Good luck," "God speed," or "Goodbye," along with a shake of the hand or a pat on the back or a kiss.

Ted and his old school pal, Dab, were given a send-off by some of the village boys and girls. Apart from the red, white, and blue decorations, a bunch of Allies' flags with

the Union Jack placed upside down, and the uniform of the guests of honour—who remained seated to their toast while the company sang "Australia Will be There"—it was the usual merry party of youth as in peace-time. Of course Ted and Dab received much attention from the girls, who were ever ready to kiss and be kissed; but, as this happened to be Ted's debut, he was rather shy. and did not warm up to the idea until it was time to go.

He walked home with a buxom bunch of sweetness who, in that hour of her hero worship, wanted more than the one kiss he gave her over the garden gate, but Ted, like Ginger Mick—or was it the Sentimental Bloke?—knew not what the 'ell to do with his two hands. Yes, he agreed they should write to each other, and he promised to keep her miniature photograph, which, by the way, was resting in a silver match-box that kept company throughout the war with the identification disk hanging against his chest from a piece of string tied around his neck. On the way to his own home under the stars of a cloudless sky, Ted meditated on the beauty of her countenance and the warmth and brightness of her being, and, imagining the sweetness of her presence still with him, decided he was in love.

Mother and Dad, waiting up for his return, may have guessed something of his feelings from the flush that penetrated his tan, but any serious thoughts they may have entertained were quickly relieved by the hearty manner in which he disposed of the dainty supper Mother had prepared. He told them about the party, and was saying something of the girl he had taken home, when Dad came to his rescue and saved further explanation with the reminder that it was long past time for bed.

His almost worn-out bicycle he handed over to the elder of his two young brothers, but he put away other souvenirs of his youth, such as his first suit of long-'uns, and his one and only school prize (the inscription on the fly-leaf of which he glanced at with a grin). The family having promised to visit him in camp on the evening before embarkation, this made his leaving home more easy, but more than once he looked back and wondered if he would ever see the place again.

On the Sunday preceding departure Ted attended the battalion church parade at St Andrew's Cathedral. Next day the unit was paraded to hear the C.O.'s address to his officers and men, but beyond the words "King and Country," "traditions," "duty," and "victory," Ted heard little of that stirring speech, for he could see his people on the "outer" waiting to say good-bye.

Mere words cannot adequately portray the emotional and touching scenes of that evening, when over a thousand of Australia's manhood parted, many for ever, from those they loved. Some walked With the maidens they adored, no doubt whispering sweet vows of eternal love. Some parted from mothers who held and pressed them to their hearts again and again, and said nothing. Others parted from wives sobbing in awful fear, some of them accompanied by children yet too young to understand the tears. That rough old diamond Barney butted in everywhere with his cheery laughter and happy songs, and, as Ted and his mother broke their long embrace, Barney called, "Good-bye, keep smiling, Mum!"

Ted's father was waiting at the gate of the camp when, at 4.45 a.m. on Tuesday, the 9th of November 1915, the battalion swung out on what for many was to be their last march on Aussie soil. Many members of the tramway volunteers, between whom and the 30th there had been some unfriendly feeling, also gathered at the gate in various stages of undress, many of them in bare feet, and they cheered the departing troops in unison. One chap with a voice reminiscent of a barracker's voice on the hill of the Sydney Cricket Ground, was heard to ask that they leave him a few Turkish tarts in the harem, and someone else advised suitable though unmentionable treatment for the Kaiser.

When the battalion was marching at ease, Ted's dad, with one of Ted's kit-bags under his arm, took the opportunity of having a few last words with some of the signallers, and Ted would have been greatly agitated had he known that Dad had confided his son's age and a few other things to the O.C. As the column neared No. 1 wharf at Woolloomooloo Bay, Dad again took his place alongside Ted, and, as he hurriedly handed over the kit-bag, the youth saw, through his own dim eyes, a tear on the strong yet smiling face of Dad, and received, without any self-

conscious feeling, the emotional kiss of parting before he passed through those now historic gates to the troopship.

After officials had checked up the embarkation roll and found all present and correct, they ordered the disappointed section of reserve men to return to camp, as there were no deserters' places for them to fill. Then the troops filed up the gangway and boarded the troopship A. 72. Breakfast of porridge and sausages was waiting on the mess-tables as the signallers took up quarters underneath the for'ard well-deck.

They were in the midst of doing justice to the meal when Lieutenant Mac (O.C., 1st Reinforcements) discovered they had taken the position allotted his men. As he stood there frowning like fury, and with arms folded, Sam loudly asked Tom if he had ever seen the famous picture of Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo, and as Tom turned round to view the picture, Lieutenant Mac, red with indignation, said to Sam: "Are you trying to be funny at my expense?"

"Oh no, sir, I was merely referring to something of an historic character," replied Sam.

"Because, if you are," continued Mac, "you'll find that I can be much funnier at your expense." And, to the titter of subdued laughter, he took himself off.

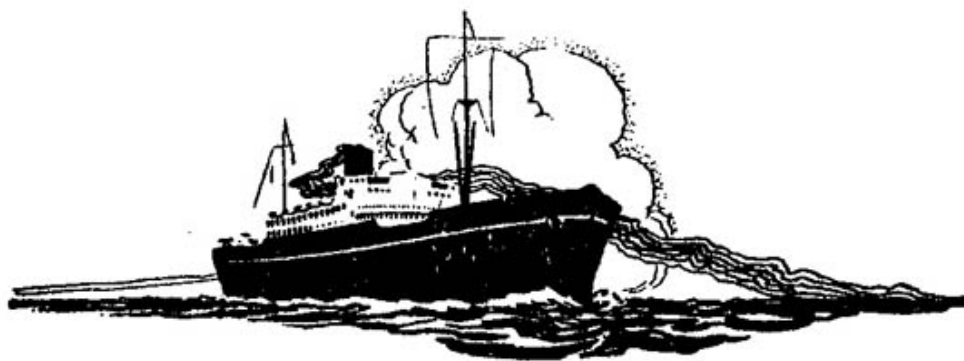
With breakfast disposed of, the signallers moved across to what was the corresponding position on the right, or as Barney called it, starboard side of the ship, and after being issued with hammocks and rough, cream-coloured blankets, which they stowed in bins, they were allowed to go on deck.

When at 8.30 the public, after two hours' enforced waiting, surged on to the wharf, a great cheer went up from two thousand khaki-clad figures who, swarming from mast-heads, rigging, and railings, almost blotted out from sight the superstructure of the ship. For the whole fifteen minutes preceding departure it was just one long cheer, above which could be occasionally heard loud and piercing shrieks of women, until finally the blast of the siren announced that the ship was getting under way and the fussy little tugs took charge of her. There was now a break in the cheering as the band played "Auld Lang

Syne." Thousands of multi-coloured streamers, at first brightly waving, then slightly tugging, grew taut and finally snapped to hang forlornly in the hands of those who, now speechless, would for ever remember that day.

When the vessel pulled into mid-stream, the ferries greeted it with shrill whistles of cock-adoodle-do. After the Governor-General had given an inspiring address to the "gentlemen of the light horse and men of the infantry," in which he dramatically mentioned they were going on special service to a new front, Alan Rubberneck got busy with his furphy wireless and gave it out that the Dardanelles had been forced and they were bound to back up the Russian "steam roller" via the Black Sea. A rumour from the aft latrine then had it that Mesopotamia was to be their destination; and at dinner-time there was much argument, which was only rivalled in importance by a discussion on the merits of the menu.

Having waved to the fleet of launches grown dim in the distance, and finally cheered the last cock-adoodle-do of a Manly ferry, the ship passed through the Heads at three in the afternoon. At last the long drawn out farewell had come to an end, and Ted, with sickly grin and believing no one to be looking, dropped his first but only half-smoked cigar over the side.



## CHAPTER VI. SYDNEY TO SUEZ

First thoughts—From hammock to officers' mess—Housie, banker and crown and anchor—A church parade—A dark horse and a fair cow—A concert and crossing the line—Maggots and weevils—Suez.

(9 November—11 December 1915)

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Most Diggers sailed with a diary, few wrote them up. Ted's is reproduced here.

*H.M.A.T. "Beltana" (A.72). At Sea, Nov. 9th 1915.*—It has just gone 5 p.m., and according to the joker in the crow's nest, gazing out to sea and not taking the least notice of the chaps feeding the fishes—all's well. What with the excitement of the day, that damned cigar I'd saved for the occasion, and the sight of pickles on the mess-table for tea, it is little wonder I'm not feeling too good myself. Anyhow, I'm not the only one, and for that matter I guess the folk at home are feeling a bit off their tucker too. My thoughts up to now are mostly about what others are thinking, and I am worried about the sadness of Mother and Dad at home. I feel sorry that I have caused them so much trouble, but I am relieved to be at last on the way, for I know now that they will not call me back. Barney has just informed me he and I are mess orderlies for tomorrow, and, as the thought of it makes me feel like showing visible signs of seasickness, I'm going up on deck.

*Thursday, Nov. 11th.*—It is 8 p.m. and here we are again. Some of the boys are playing banker at one end of the mess-table, and a game of housie-housie is in progress on the hatch. As mess orderly yesterday, I managed to dish up the boys' tucker and keep mine down. It is rougher now, but I'm feeling better, so don't suppose I'll be seasick after all. The daily routine, according to orders, is to be: Reveille 6 a.m., physical jerks, 6.45 to 7.30, breakfast 7.45, parade 9.30 to 11.45 (with half an hour smoko), dinner at noon, parade again 2 to 4 (with a quarter of an hour smoko), tea at 4.30, and lights out at 9.15; no afternoon duties on Saturday, and only physical drill and church parade on Sunday. Counting church parade, because it is compulsory or optional to peeling spuds, the actual working hours on this voyage will total twenty per week with pay at the rate of two shillings per hour; and as food, if you can eat it, is chucked in, a soldier's life at sea in terms of £.s.d. is not too bad. Of course between parades there's always some fatigue duty to be done.

The hammocks, much more comfortable than bare boards, are strung up over the mess-tables in formation,

so that you have the heads of two and feet of two other of your neighbours meeting on either side about your middle. The lights go out, the latecomers scramble in and are cursed for their bumps, someone sings a song and is told to shut his bloody mouth, a smutty yarn brings wild laughter while the wowsers go crook, and then, gently swaying to the motion of the ship, we fall asleep. As the troops are packed like sardines above the line of port-holes, the air becomes thick with the smell of smoke and bodies; awakening with reveille, we hurry to the deck and wait in long lines taking deep breaths of the fresh salt air, as we push those in front and curse the slowness of the early birds, who seem to have taken up permanent residence in the improvised and much too small wash-houses and latrines.

After stowing hammocks and blankets, we eat some canteen biscuits, and then a bout of boxing gives interest to the physical jerks parade. Sitting on forms at the bare board mess-tables, we await the orderlies, who come very carefully down the steep companion-way, carrying porridge, stew or sausages, and dippers of vile-tasting tea. We laugh as one of the orderlies, holding a dish of stew with both hands, falls ace over head from half-way down the steps, and we add insults to his injuries. Had it contained sausages we could have picked them up, but Tiny, our mongrel mascot, is already licking up the mess, and for us it only means waiting a little longer, for, as lots are suffering from seasickness, the galley has a surplus supply of food. Some; more finnickier than others, just pick here and there at the food, while a few, loudly complaining of the tucker, scoff it down their uncouth necks at a rate that is only checked by their belching after long gulps of the stinking tea.

The morning parade of the signallers if one is not detailed for duty on the bridge, is taken on the boat-deck. The usual flag-wagging and buzzer practice with the same old lectures will, no doubt, be dished up to us time and time again. We have to speed up the sending and reading of Morse to about thirty words per minute on the buzzer, and as Jim and Joe can do about forty they are marking time. Sometimes they talk to each other in Morse, and, judging by their amusement and the few words I pick up, "indulge in personalities," as Sam would say.



Each of the three courses of the midday meal tastes about the same, but perhaps that is because the soup spoons and the fork of the second course have to be used for the sweet. To-day's sweet consisted of plum duff, which was promptly labelled "guttapercha-pud," and, as (according to my dictionary) gutta-percha is a reddish-brown horn-like substance of inspissated juice of a certain tree, I reckon it's a good name. If the ship gets torpedoed when the men are carrying a belly full of this tack, they'll sink like stones.

This afternoon we had some instruction about the mercantile international code. In between parades most of the boys play card games and housie-housie, the latter being the only money game allowed. The most enjoyable part of the day, however, if you don't think of the good things they are eating, is the evening officers' mess when the band plays selections. I have just returned from the boat-deck, where, being alone, I feasted on the music, and, in the fading light of the setting sun, let my mind wander back to the old folk at home. Somehow I like the lonely feeling that comes over me at sunset, but I must not mention this in my letters or they'll think I'm homesick, which at this time of day, I truly am.

*Friday, Nov. 12th.*—Did my turn at duty on the bridge to-day, won 8/6 at banker—Barney says mugs for luck—and bought a feed of tinned fish. The weather is very rough and cold, so I am wearing my sheepskin vest for the first time. The officers have just finished dinner; I enjoyed it, I mean the music part, very much. There's a chap inviting all and sundry to try their luck at his crown-and-anchor board. "Come on, come on, stick it on, where you like and where you fancy, who'll have a bit on the ol' 'ook?" So here goes, I'll give it a fly.

*Sunday, Nov. 14th.*—It rained last night, and today is very cold and rough. Had another win at banker yesterday, but fell for the crown and anchor stunt again and am now down a few bob on the trip. Somehow I can't enjoy a smoke. Attended C. of E. church parade on the well deck this afternoon. The chaplain addressed us about the purpose of our mission in the cause of righteousness, and said that God, being ever just and merciful, would lead us to victory in this war to end wars for evermore. He made me feel glad that I am on the winning side—not that I

have ever felt otherwise—and some of us, forgetting it was a church parade, began to clap. There where prayers for the Allies, the loved ones at home, and for forgiveness of the enemy. The service—with the hymns "Eternal Father," "Onward Christian Soldiers," and Kipling's "Recessional"—was most impressive, and concluded with the National Anthem.

Found out to-day that if you are in the know and have a few bob for a steward, you can get a hot bath and decent cup of tea, so I had both and a piece of toast as well. And now, having been to church, had a bath and a clean cup of tea, and written home, I feel at peace with the world, so will turn in.

*Monday, Nov. 15th.*—There's no change in the weather, the tucker, or the routine, and, as land or ships have not been sighted, I'm feeling fed up. Someone has told the O.C. my age, but, judging by his wink when he took me to task about it, I don't think he'll put me away. He probably remembers the night at the Showground when I overheard him taking a lingering farewell of "Babby"—she called him "Tanny." I was up on one of the tank stands feeding some fresh leaves to our native bear, and they were immediately underneath, until I disturbed them with an excellent imitation of a cock-crow. Yes, I think he will keep my secret, and Barney reckons it will be all right.

Fell down the blasted steps to-day, and, as I was bending down to get a view of my bruise in a polished steel mirror, someone squirted it with a mouthful of water. That's his idea of a joke—the dirty cow. Don't feel like sitting down any longer, so am going for a walk with Barney to get a drink of fresh air before turning in. The crown-and-anchor king has been put in clink for getting drunk. The whisky cost him about £2 a bottle, and Barney reckons he'd give a fiver for one now.

*Tuesday, Nov. 16th.*—The weather to-day has been calm, warm, and bright, and, except for my sore nether end, I'm feeling good-oh. The early morning topic of conversation was a review of what we were doing at that time a week ago—marching down to the transport. And then, at the same hour as leaving Sydney, we passed the hospital ship *Kyarra* homeward bound with wounded. Painted all white and flying a Red Cross flag she looked very nice, and

I suppose those poor chaps on board are feeling very excited and happy at seeing the Aussie coast, at King George's Sound, which has just faded from our vision. I believe we expected to feel like different beings once the ship sailed, but after a week at sea we have come to realize ourselves as being little changed. The sight of the hospital ship has established our bearings—we have got a long way to go.

To return to the present—what is there to growl about? Only that something has gone wrong with the latrine just above our mess-deck and, as the filthy overflow would come through the port-holes, we have to keep them shut. It will be pretty rotten sleeping here to-night, so I think I'll go with Barney who has taken up lodgings on some bales down in the hold below.

*Wednesday, Nov. 17th.*—Sleeping down here has its disadvantages. We both slept in, missed the last sight of Aussie at 6.30 a.m., and got into trouble for being late on parade. Our bikes are stowed in this hold, and as there is plenty of room, we practise trick riding. This possie is below the water-line, and it gets a bit depressing in the dim yellow light of a few small electric globes. If anything goes wrong while we are down here I wonder if we'll hear. Must ask someone up top to give us the office if the alarm goes. A boxing match on the fore hatch this afternoon only lasted two rounds. But for the advice the spectators kept shouting, it was most uninteresting. The ship has taken to rolling instead of pitching, but otherwise things are much the same.

*Thursday, Nov. 18th.*—We are in the Indian Ocean and have to-day been shown our lifeboat and raft positions. Machine-gun positions have been fixed, and the best rifle-shots have also been detailed to act in the event of a submarine attack. I find myself almost wishing that a submarine would pay us a visit, and my thoughts have gone so far as to picture the signal section afloat on a raft, with O.C. Stan giving us physical jerks and complaining, as he does now, about our inability to remain steady despite the changing of the centre of gravity. It is a change to think of what might happen but I don't suppose anything half so interesting will come our way. In fact I am afraid we will be stiff enough to arrive too late for the war. It being our tenth day out we had a medical parade

to-day, a most amusing affair, except for a few who have been isolated.

*Friday, Nov. 19th.*—Same old routine. Weather getting hot and sea very calm. Had life-belt drill this morning, and someone remarked that Jim J. looked like a native bear in the family way.

*Saturday, Nov. 20th.*—Washing clothes, boxing, and a tug-o'-war has been the programme this afternoon. Wish I could use my fins a bit better, but according to Barney I'm not the worst boxer on the boat. Barney has a long skinny chap in secret training, who is as slow with his fists as he is in waking up to the leg-pulling stunt. We rub him down with rough bags and engine-oil, and have him running round our hold for hours on end while we play cards. He has just come back for more and wants to know if he should enter for the heavy or lightweight championship of the boat, but Barney advises him to remain a dark horse, as indeed he will for many a day because we are gradually increasing the proportion of lamp-black in the engine-oil.

Heads to be shaved and upper lips to be left unshaved is the latest King's Regulation. Reg H. up to now has not broken one of the King's Regulations, but refuses to have his wool off. "It's a fair cow," he protests. The boys have grabbed him and have run one bald stripe from his forehead to the back of his neck. Poor old Reg is going crook a treat, but as he does not swear he can't get anyone to believe that he really wants the job finished. He'll be the goat on the altar at church parade to-morrow, and in a week's time I'll be the kid without a mo. It is time to go to the concert, the first on board I wonder what it will be like?

*Sunday, Nov. 21st.*—The concert was a great success. Major B. sang every verse of "Who killed Cock Robin," and one of the chaps, a born mimic, imitated everyone of any importance. He gave us the Governor-General's speech and took Major H. off to a "t." The boat rocked with laughter when he imitated the colonel and his funny whistle. The colonel, however, failed to see the joke and did not move a muscle or turn a hair of his so far un-bald head. Did not go to church parade this morning; was spud barber instead.

*Monday, Nov. 22nd.*—Inspection by the colonel of the morning's full-dress parade was followed by a tug-o'-war between the light horse and our officers, who won both ways. The weather now being tropical, awnings have been placed over the bridge and decks and most of us have cut our dungarees down to shorts. A canvas swimming-bath has been erected on the well-deck and an officer and several N.C.Os have been ducked fully dressed. One of the chaps has a hunt scene tattooed on his back, but as the fox is hopping into its hole you can only see its tail. The ocean is a beautiful blue to-day, and is only broken by the bow of our ship where I have spent a few hours sun-baking and looking at the flying-fish.

Reg has the hair off one side of his head now, and as he is beginning to froth at the mouth I think it's time to finish the job, so have invited him down here. As Barney shaves Reg's head and shouts encouragement to Puglongun who in his oiled nakedness is running the meat off his bones, this dismal hole looks like a rat-house.

*Tuesday, Nov. 23rd.*—Ron and I slept on deck last night, and the wind having changed we woke up to laugh at each other's faces covered in soot from the funnel. There has been a slight improvement in the food to-day—yesterday's was rotten. On my way to the boat-deck this evening I had a look at the officers feeding. The port-hole did not permit a full view of the performance, but I saw sufficient to convince me that at least a few know more about swinging a walking-stick than of wielding a knife, fork, and spoon. To one who tipped his soup plate the wrong way I felt like shouting, "When in doubt wait for the roll of the boat." I wish they would give me the job of teaching them table etiquette by numbers, or the post of taster would suit me as well. Food seems to be the principal subject of my diary, and so it should be, for did not some general say, "An army marches on its stomach." That may be so, but it seems to me that, apart from "the heads," this battalion sails on its wind. The evening band programme was, as usual, the most enjoyable event of the day.

*Wednesday, Nov. 24th.*—Owing to shortage of fresh water, steam has had to be diverted from the engines to the condensers, and our speed has been slowed up.

*Friday, Nov. 26th.*—Some of the chaps are continually scribbling. It beats me what they find to write about. Sam only draws sixpence a day and has everything worked out, even to the number of words he can write with an ink tablet. Wish this war was a bit nearer. Think I'll chuck up writing this diary until we arrive at the Big Smoke. It's about time we got some pay as I have spent nearly all my money except a pound I lent to Potash, who is running a banker school and has promised me a fiver if it turns out all right.

*Saturday, Nov. 27th.*—What the eye doesn't see the heart doesn't grieve for, but, when you see maggots dropping from the seams of the bench where they cut up the meat behind the latrine, it reminds you there's only one thing worse than eating a grub and that's finding you have only eaten half of one. While others ate roast meat, Barney and I shared a tin of canteen tongues, and we were enjoying the issue of stewed dried-fruit when someone discovered the ground-rice-looking-substance to be weevils. Then the orderly officer came, and was greeted with song: "We don't want your apples, we don't want your apples, we don't want your apples, you can—" He agreed we had cause for complaint and mounted the stairs while the mob sang, to the tune of a bugle call, "Officers' wives have puddings and pies, but sergeants' wives have skilly; the dirty old cook he fell in our soup and burnt the skin off his belly." While some bandsmen played the "Dead March," mess orderlies, carrying dishes of stewed apples, led a "funeral" parade along the promenade deck.

So what we missed in nourishment, if any, we made up for in merriment, and some of the chaps suggested going on strike. Any strike other than a hunger strike would of course be mutiny on the high seas, and, though it was difficult to see how we could all be put in clink, the idea was ruled out. A boxing match that looked like providing the material for a real burial at sea came to an end when the prospective corpse's second threw in the towel at the end of the second round.

*Sunday, Nov. 28th.*—I don't know why, but for the first time in my life I have experienced the feeling of being uplifted from the state of self-consciousness that I have always felt in church. It was not because of anything in particular that the chaplain said—he, the officers, and we

men were as one—but it seemed that the sky, the ocean, the breeze, and our singing were all sublimely blended in one beautiful presence. One does not discuss the spiritual with one's fellow men, but I am sure that they all equally feel, not the service, but the Presence. The service was but the medium that brought us together, and now that the chaplain and officers have returned to their saloon and we to our lesser quarters, I feel that we remain spiritually united in this great adventure of life. Life, as I see it, is like looking with envious and critical eyes through the port-hole of the officers' mess on one's way to view and enjoy the beauty and restfulness of the sunset. In time perhaps I might earn my place in that mess, but meantime I can share with them the sweet music of the spiritual life. That material life is one damn thing after another is true enough, but the thing to remember is that there is always something good. Must make a note in my diary twelve months hence to remind me of this day, for I might never again have the inspiration for such deep thought.

*Monday, Nov. 29th.*—Went on parade this morning with a false mo. and got told off. Father Neptune and his retinue of roughs came on board last night. Heralded by bugle, cornet, and trombone artists, all playing independently, and followed by other instrumentalists playing likewise, Father Nep., Mrs Nep., their chucker-out, slaves, and mermaids, together with a blanket elephant that had swallowed two men,; paraded the decks and gave us ten minutes' amusement before lights out. So that we might attend Neptune's court, this afternoon was proclaimed a holiday. From my high position on one of the derrick booms overlooking the well-deck I had a good view of the amusing proceedings, and was safe from being shanghaied into it. As each victim sat on the seat of initiation the barber's naked nigger offsider swiped him over both cheeks with a soap-sudded whitewash brush, and then the barber shaved him with two mighty sweeps of his immense wooden razor and knocked him rotten with a crack under the chin into the canvas tub where several willing slaves proceeded to try and drown him. So that's the delightful ceremony of crossing the line. For a while the "old timers" had it on us until the show ended with Nep. and Co. being thrown into the bath and forced to swallow much of its contents.

Crossing the line has brought the signallers some new work. We start off to-night by getting familiar with the stars of the northern hemisphere—Charlie Chaplin, Flora Finch, John Bunny, etc.—in case during our future nightly wanderings we want to locate the direction of the poles.

Drew a pound's worth of my eighteen-pence-a-day allowance yesterday, and proceeded to do it in at banker, but my luck changed for the better, and I'm now well in funds. It gives one a feeling of some contentment to have a well-filled money-belt rubbing against one's less contented tummie.

*Tuesday, Nov. 30th.*—The machine-gunners had some practice shooting at empty cases floating in our wake. A lecture about Egypt, the customs of the people, and the precautions to be taken against venereal disease, was, though more to the point, much about the same as I have already heard. It seems that there's more than one fly in the milk and honey pots of Egypt, and we have formed the impression that prostitution is the principal occupation of the female inhabitants, and its sexual side the only sight-seeing attraction. All this talk has made me curious, but I have decided that such forms of recreation are not for me. Two members of the crew have been convicted of stealing money-belts, etc., from the troops. The world does not seem such a beautiful place to-day.

*Wednesday, Dec. 1st.*—One long growl about the food. Complaints brought forth an issue of jam and a promise that things will be looked into.

*Thursday, Dec. 2nd.*—Slight improvement in the food. It is getting hotter every day. Sighted land at 5.30 this evening, otherwise nothing to report.

*Friday, Dec. 3rd.*—Had kit-bag inspection to-day. We continue towards the war at the hair-raising speed of ten knots, and all's well.

*Saturday, Dec. 4th.*—Passed the Island of Perim and about half a dozen ships to-day. The shores of the Red Sea are rugged and barren. The white buildings of the port of Mocha made a pretty picture and its isolation caused one to wonder why it was there.



*Sunday, Dec. 5th.*—Church parade cancelled owing to intense heat. Passed several ships, one with Indian troops on board, signalling us good luck. A storm commencing with a terrific thunder-clap put the wind up the boys, who rushed up on deck. All letters have to be handed in for censoring to-day, and we have been instructed not to write too much.

[Ted's letters home, complaining only of the elements beyond the control of man, such as the heat of the tropics and cold of the Australian Bight, gave the impression that he was enjoying a holiday cruise with a company of missionaries. He concluded his loving wishes and reassuring statements as to the cleanliness of body and state of mind with the usual phrase, "I am having a good time."]

*Monday, Dec. 6th.*—Paid ten bob. Paraded stewed peaches garnished with maggots before the colonel, who has instructed someone to look into it. We would like to have the pleasure of the company of the merchant who supplied the fodder for this trip.

*Tuesday, Dec. 7th.*—We have paraded in full marching order and are all bucked up at the prospect of arriving at Suez in the morning.

*Wednesday, Dec. 8th.*—We gave a good old cheer as the *Beltana* at 8 a.m. dropped anchor in the port of Suez, where about fifty other merchant ships, now mostly acting as troopships, and two warships make an impressive scene. Hundreds of natives in boats of all descriptions are making a bee-line for our ship, and, as lots of the boys are getting the hoses ready and arming themselves with spuds, I can see some fun within the next few minutes. The banker business of Potash & Co. has turned out all right for Potash but not so good for the Co. Potash is a Yid, and as he paid me principal and 200 per cent interest he told me I could have the three balls from above his door.

*Saturday, Dec. 11th.*—It has just gone 9 a.m. and we are at last drawing into the wharf. Of course there has been much disappointment and growling over the delay in disembarkation, but the last few days have not been without amusement. The Gyppo hawkers—mostly dressed

in white, but not snow-like, flowing garments, and wearing various kinds of head gear including the red fez—have up to now attracted most of our attention. This attention has not always been to the Gyppo's liking. He has been beaten down in his prices, pelted with spuds and abused, but, having no self-respect, keeps coming back for more. His wares consist of postcards and souvenirs of Egyptian crafts, which I am told are mostly made in Birmingham and India. Then there are figs, dates, Turkish delight, oranges, and hard boiled eggs they call "eggs-a-cook." A couple of fortune tellers compete and try to outdo each other in predicting most marvellous good fortunes and victory for us in war.

Like the lady who when shown an oil-painting said "What a beautiful frame," I like the picture of Suez best when it is framed in the darkness of night. Then the inquiring searchlights of warships, a steamer coming slowly through the Canal and the sound of Eastern music stealing over the waters, transform this otherwise uninteresting place into an enchantment of ever-changing, brilliant illumination, twinkling lights, silhouettes and reflections of the low-lying hills and the city and ships in port.

Boat racing in the ship's lifeboats has afforded recreation to some of the boys; but without exception we are itching to get ashore and, according to all accounts, we shall be itching when we get there.

When at last the pilot came alongside, we, being ignorant of his official mission, presented him with the usual spray of spuds, which forced both him and his officer to leave the tiller and seek shelter in the cabin of their launch. The launch shot aimlessly here and there until it had received the last of the potatoes, when the pilot, with as much dignity as his smashed fez would permit, came aboard.

The wharf-labouring natives go easy with their work. They do it to music, or, rather, to a monotonous chant in which they all join "Ee-ar-ee-ar, ar-ar-ee-ar" and so on with much hand-clapping. The boss Gyppo carries a stick and when he has occasion to use it, as is often the case, all the other Gyppos knock off work to laugh at their less fortunate comrade. Seems to me there's good scope for a union secretary here and an employers' organization would also be an advantage.



## CHAPTER VII. TOURING AT SIX BOB A DAY

Tod and a case of eggs—A guide and a steam-roller—Heliopolis to Cairo—Morning tea, the Wazir and a donkey ride—A cycle trip and orders to move to the front.

(12 December-15 December 1915)

*Sunday, Dec. 12th.*—We disembarked at 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon and immediately entrained, and travelling via Helmieh, arrived at the Aerodrome Camp, Heliopolis, at 2.30 this morning. The journey was almost without incident. For a time after leaving Suez we travelled through flat desert country studded with a few palms and some flat-roofed mud dwellings. The train swayed, jolting and creaking onward into the night, and I soon fell asleep.

It must have been about midnight when I awakened to the babel of Gyppos crying their wares, and particularly to the shouting in my ear of one of them: "Oringies, oringies, two for half." Looking down I helped myself to one of his juicy oranges, and as he grabbed my wrist I used my free hand to upset his basket—and that's where the fun began. The boys, looking for some excitement, tossed the loudly protesting niggers out on to the platform and then, commandeering a case of eggs, chased and pelted them out into the desert until their ghostlike figures melted into the night. The engine whistle was the signal for us to return, and we found the adjutant in heated debate with the station-master, who was demanding payment for the case of eggs before he would allow the train to proceed.

Tod paid him a sovereign. The station-master came back for more. Tod gave him another, but the stationmaster was still not satisfied. "Come on, don't hold the war up," someone shouted. Tod paid out a third sovereign, the word of reprimand was passed along, and we settled down once more.

On arrival at Helmieh we set out with a guide for our camp. After marching for what seemed like hours, we passed for the third time a wayside steamroller, whereupon the guide, questioned, admitted he must have taken a wrong turn. In full marching order and in bad nick, and with tempers on edge, we were silently tramping past a village when a dog barked and Rubberneck's command of "Lay down Watercan!" put us in good humour again.

While we were standing at attention in front of our tents at 3 o'clock in the morning, and waiting for God knows what, our O.C. asked the major: "Could I have an extra tent for stores, sir?" "Damn the stores," was the reply, "Get your men to bed."

From here the camp appears to extend for a couple of miles along the foot of a sandy slope that gently rises to the town of Heliopolis. It is a bell-tent encampment with a number of large matting huts for mess purposes.

Except for a darkie having just been upended into his crate of doughnuts, and liberally sprinkled with icing sugar, there's nothing to report.

Hurrah! Here goes, it's 10 a.m. and we have leave for the day.

*Monday, Dec. 13th.*—The letterhead of the Y.M.C.A. where I am writing portrays a scene with a palm grove and 18-pounder gun in the foreground and the Sphinx and Pyramids in the distance. If coloured, probably it would be of vivid yellows and greens with a blazing red sunset, like the pictures of Egypt one sees in the shops, but in reality not resembling that of the landscape. Perhaps my eyes have been dimmed to the beauties and wonders of this country, for my travels so far have not taken me beyond its man-made sordidness, though I must admit having seen something more than the Wazir. It is because of my shame at the degrading sights I have

voluntarily witnessed, and, I confess, their humorous entertainment, that I have refrained from recording my experiences of yesterday. I might well pass over this period, but the recording of it will probably do me good, reopening my mind and dimmed eyes to the commonplace things of Egypt which, if not beautiful, will be so by contrast with what I have so far seen. And now to return to yesterday.

Approaching Heliopolis we, five in number, were besieged by the welcoming natives with whom we exchanged our Australian money for 96 piastres to the pound, and then purchased stout cane walking-sticks with which we proceeded to clear the way. Heliopolis we found to be a modern town of broad streets, extensive squares, and attractive architecture. The buildings, mostly white, appear to have been built within the last ten years, but not having time to make inquiry we proceeded on our way.

Following the main stream of Aussie traffic, we came to the centre of the town and boarded the tram for Cairo. On the southern outskirts of the town the tram, a most modern and comfortable conveyance, runs on to a railway track and does the four miles to Cairo at a speed of some fifty miles an hour alongside a straight and charming avenue of trees.

Here we were given another reception by some hundreds of the population, all of whom have something to beg or sell, and again we got busy with our sticks. We were continually being met and followed by vendors of cigarettes, post-cards, bead necklaces, and silks, loudly praising their wares, but we endeavoured to keep on the move, for to stop meant having a howling and fighting mob of boys at our feet screaming "Dinkum Kiwi, Mister MacKenzie, polishum bootsa quick." A crying boot boy tearfully wailing "Soldier kicka da gutza bootsa" immediately turned off the tear-tap as he received our sympathetic *baksheesh* piastres.

We thought of morning tea, but on entering an Italian café decided to have a feed. Barney ordered the tucker regardless of expense. "Who'll have some more turkey?" he called. "We all will," was the reply, and Barney followed the waiter to the kitchen from which he returned with a roast turkey complete. While arguing with the

proprietor, he pro-ceded to cut up and dish out the bird, but the Dago was not satisfied until we each paid fifty piastres on account. We had some more beer, a smoke, and a song. Some Tommies gathered at the open door and gaped at us, and the Dago again got restless, but we carried on until we had our fill and then set out in quest of adventure.

Hunger satisfied, and radiant with beer, we somehow felt well disposed towards the natives as they pestered us on our way, and as we passed Shepheard's Hotel, reserved for officers, we felt not the least bit envious.

There was an abrupt change in our surroundings as we left the Sharia Kamel and entered the native quarter, with its narrow winding streets lined with squalid looking houses, in a state of crumbling decay. A veteran pointed out the scene of the battle of the Wazir, and told us why and how they set fire to the place, cut the fire hoses into handy lengths and used them to knock the Gyppo police off their horses. He told us where we can buy photos of the battle and showed us some examples of lewd photography procurable at the same place. Though we had no desire to possess such vile rubbish, we were determined to see for ourselves the subjects of the pictures and the stories we had heard.

Laughing and joking about the almost naked women who beckoned to us as they suggestively strutted up and down the balconies, we passed on into the wickedly pulsating heart of the Wazir. Here we found a soldier trying to drag his drunken mate away from the entrance to a brothel, in front of which its commissioner was pointing in turn to each of the painted objects of his stock-in-trade, and saying "Quice kateer, verra nice, verra clean;" but, apart from the drunk, no one took him seriously and he ducked just in time to avoid an over-ripe orange which went squash against the wall.

"This way to Fark Moy's," someone called out, but instead of going there we entered a doorway and went carefully up several flights of steps, paid two piastres and were admitted to a room bare of furniture and with a dried-mud floor. Some were given lighted candles to hold and as soon as a sufficient number were present to form a khaki dado round the walls, a black girl entered and, discarding

her shawl, revealed, but for the snake tattooed on her belly, complete nakedness. She danced the can-can, did evolutions with a cigarette, and then took up a collection that was to be shared with a Gyppo policeman, who also stripping off did his stunt while the boys spilt hot candle-grease on him. As we passed out of the room and down the dark steps, I was no longer able to contain myself, and vomited, only to be cursed by the chap in front. But he had not counted on Barney, who swore it was he who was sick, and so, as the waiting troops went up for the next session, we passed on.

Barney felt sorry for me, for he understood why I was sick, but I insisted that the turkey had upset me and joked about the performance we had just seen. We found our way to the Y.M.C.A. in Esbekia Gardens, had a wash and settled down in easy chairs. I was soon sound asleep. Awakening I found Barney still with me, but the others had gone, so the two of us had afternoon tea and decided on a donkey ride through the bazaars.

Astride our donkeys, both called Moses, away we went. There was no chance of pinching off with the donks, or for that matter guiding them where we wanted to go, for they obey every word of the donkey boys, who shout as they follow up behind. Dodging through the busy traffic of the main streets we turned off into the bazaar and as we wended our way along the dirty unpaved narrow lanes the sound of wheeled traffic quickly died away.

Here the tall houses on either side with overhanging balconies almost meet above the heads of the traffic, and as we picked our way among the camels, donkeys, and pedestrians we had time to gaze at the shops opening on to the streets. These, some of them little more than cubby-holes in the ground floors of the houses, display all manner of goods out on to the street. The natives work at their various trades and the hammering of the tinsmiths and brass-workers now and then rises above the babel of the swarming populace. We saw a tailor squatting over his work at the opening of his cubby-hole, also carpet makers, shoe makers, purveyors of food and drink and silks and all manner of Oriental trappings and tapestries, and Barney upset a nigger who was carrying a tray of pastry-looking stuff on his head. We passed a mosque, its beauty standing out in contrast to the squalid surroundings, and

from its lofty minaret we heard the wailing of a priest calling to his God. A tall veiled Egyptian mother carrying a babe upon her shoulder looked at us with large dark eyes peering from either side of a gilt cylinder worn on her nose. She was accepting a brass pannikin of drinking water from an aged Egyptian who carried a goatskin water-bag over his shoulder. Suddenly we came out on to a main street again, and found that our trip had been a round one, for we were back in Opera Square. The donkey boys had received payment in advance, but we tipped them well for their run, and returned to the Y.M.C.A. for more tea.

Wandering around Cairo we found amusement everywhere. Then remembering we were not tourists, we made our way back to camp, meeting on the way the same black boot-boy crying "Soldier kicka da gutza bootsa" but this time he gets only a *baksheesh* boot.

To-night Barney and I are resting at the Y.M.C.A. in Heliopolis since having an early tea in this town. We have applied for half-day leave to-morrow, and intend going for a tour on our bicycles to have a look at the Pyramids, the Sphinx, the Citadel and such places that others have visited while we were underground. Barney has just been trying to decipher my notes of yesterday, and he informs me I've got a head like a fowl ("good at picking things up") but why I want to scratch about it he fails to understand.

Had the usual camp drill to-day, and now it is time to be getting out of town.

*Wednesday, Dec. 15th.*—We have received orders to proceed to the front to-morrow. "Verra good news, to-morrow's paper," as the Gyppo paper boys say. From what I can gather we are going into the Sinai desert to defend the Suez Canal against the Turks, who are expected to attack again. Our leather equipment has been condemned, and we are to be issued with web equipment, new rifles and ammunition to-morrow.

Yesterday's cycle trip will ever remain fresh in my memory. It was a most interesting one, and as I have an hour to spare before returning to camp at 9.30 p.m. I'll jot it down.



We had lunch in Heliopolis and then, keeping to the right of the road, pedalled into Cairo. Here we visited the European or Ismailia quarter of the city, and its picturesque Esbekia Gardens. Outside the post office, quite a modern building, we saw a number of scribes squatting at their little desks writing letters for the natives, the great majority of whom are unable to write. After our Sunday trip it was a pleasure to view the broad avenues of the European quarter where live the higher class Egyptians and other nationals, mostly French. Some of their homes are like palaces, with beautiful gardens and spacious courtyards. The homes of the Egyptians may be distinguished from those of the others by the carved wooden screens to the windows of the harems. The Egyptian women of this quarter wear thin white veils through which you can almost see their features, and, as their noses are not ornamented with gilt cylinders, you get a better look at their wondrous deep dark eyes—but not for long.

We also visited Gezireh, an island in the Nile, where most of the British population reside. From here the Nile, with its busy traffic of small boats with tall sails, and Cairo, with minarets, mosques, and white and yellow buildings in the background, make a most pleasant scene.

Standing at any one of the three bridges which span the Nile, one sees all manner of human life, as well as conveyances and animals, go by. On one cart—just a platform on two wheels with a single donkey in the shafts—I counted five black-veiled and hooded wives and six children, farmer Abdul walking alongside clad in flowing white garments. Then by way of contrast, a carriage drawn by two well groomed horses flashed past; a long string of camels padded silently over the bridge; army service wagons and lorries rattled along; a buffalo and herd of goats held up the traffic. Then we caught a glimpse of some Australian nursing sisters returning from the Pyramids in a car, while black, white, and brindle, civilians and soldiers (Tommy, New Zealand, Indian and Australian) thronged back and forth.

An early tea and away we went out of Cairo to a native village where, I am afraid, our arrival upset the peacefulness of its inhabitants. The women turned their heads away, the children and barnyard fowls raced helter

skelter into the hovels, and a camel regarded us with a most suspicious look. This little village, situated on the bank of a pool near the Nile, comprises a number of small dwellings built of mud-bricks with flat straw-thatched roofs on which chickens roost; on one I saw a goat. Some of the dwellings, with small openings for doorways and narrow unglazed windows, were surrounded with mud-and-stone walls amid tall sheltering palms. Looking out across the desert through the palm-trees, in the gorgeous sunset, one could see the peak of a pyramid peeping over the crest of a sand-hill that rose from the pond at our feet. The picture was reflected in the water at the edge of which women chattered to each other as they filled earthenware jars.

Riding away from the village I could not help looking back to gaze in wonder on the scene, but Barney, who had cursed me for bringing him all this way for "nothing," hurried me on, saying "You can stay and become sheik of the damned place if you like, but no more of this for mine."

Later—I was just enjoying a nice cup of coffee when a "jack" (military policeman) came in with the news that our battalion is moving immediately. Suppose the Turkish Patrol has been sighted, but shall go and see.



## CHAPTER VIII. BOYS OF THE SUEZ CANAL

This is war—The front—Christmas Day at Ferry Post—A night in the desert—A night with the Bikaners—A dud shell—A midnight swim—An Anzac's letter—Meditation and perspiration—Anzacs' holiday—An object

lesson—The Khedive's Star—A Gyppo's  
reference.

(15 December 1915-3 February 1916)

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*Wednesday, Dec. 15th.*—We have an all-night party. Breaking camp, folding tents, packing stores, drawing new equipment, rifles, short bayonets, and 100 rounds of ammunition per man. Someone fires a shot to see if the ammunition is dinkum. We receive 24 hours' dry rations and are paid 100 "disasters" at midnight.

*Thursday, Dec. 16th.*—Convinced that the Turks are marching pon the Canal, we laugh and joke as we struggle to put our equipment together in the dark. The O.C. informs us with much enthusiasm, "This is war, men" and, believing him to be right, we fall in at 3 a.m. and march with heavy equipment and light hearts to entrain, and leave Helmieh at 7 a.m. Tom and I have a compartment to ourselves as we are in charge of the bicycles. There is some cultivation between the railway and a canal running almost parallel but we get tired of gazing at this and have a sleep.

Arriving at Moascar, a siding three miles west of Ismailia, we detrain at 12 noon. As the train departs I say, "Where's your cardigan, Tom?" He chases the train in vain, and returns to call me a bloody fool for leaving his bloody cardigan behind.

There are Tommies and Indians in this camp, and we ask them the way to the war, but they don't seem to agree there's one "here-abart." We bivouac for the night under the stars, and I am much impressed as we lie down in rows with piled arms and the sentries march to and fro.

*Friday, Dec. 17th.*—It gets very cold towards morning—there's a heavy dew, and we get wet through. As we mount our cycles to go ahead of the battalion to the "front," the O.C. informs us that we should pedal in step, but instead we race over the sweet-water canal and on through the picturesque tree-lined streets and public gardens of Ismailia, down to the Suez Canal.

Feeling most important, we cross the pontoon bridge to Ferry Post on the east bank of Lake Tim-sah. There are

trenches at the top of a sand-hill close in front, and a garrison of Gurkhas at the bottom. Cautiously we climb the hill and more cautiously we peep over the top—our hearts sink, for there's not a sign of a Turk or any other living thing on the desert that stretches before our gaze to the horizon.

Turning about we look over Lake Timsah and see the French warship *Requin* stranded near our shore. The only bright spot on the landscape is Ismailia,' where we might have lingered to have a drink, but it's too late now; so we visit the Gurkhas, bright little chaps, but they refuse to unsheath their *kukris*, which (so it is said) have to taste blood before being re-sheathed.

And now, here comes the battalion. We tell those in front how the Gurkhas scalped seven Turks last night, but by the time the word reaches D Company, the number has risen to 700.

We have a lunch of biscuits and bully-beef, and also a little game of two-up, while the O.C. inspects the position, and then, along with five others and with Eric W. in charge, I am sent to FE, the visual signalling station of the post. The station consists of a tent, which has to be erected at the foot of the bank near the canal, and a platform, with a parapet of sand-bags, facing the "enemy" on top of the hill. We decide watches—two signallers two hours on and four off—and with a promise of remuneration I take on cook's job as well.

*Saturday, Dec. 25th.*—It is Christmas Day—I have received the first mail from home—have been to church parade (voluntary)—enjoyed my half of a Christmas pudding (being issued to each two men) from some thoughtful ladies of Western Australia, also drinks and an extra ration of cheese. The G.O.C., Canal Defences, visited us while we were having dinner. He gave us a smile and a few kind words and we felt most grateful. Now while I'm waiting for tea and the promised Christmas cake, I'll write p something from my notes of the last nine days.

The news of the evacuation from Anzac came as a great shock to all. That campaign, so far as Australia is concerned, has established us a nation in the eyes of the world and has set us a standard to maintain if we get the

opportunity. Apart from that it seems to have been a bloody washout.

Our week on the signalling station was most interesting. Signalling with flags and heliograph by day, and Begby lamp by night, we had communication with the outposts on both our left and right and sometimes with the Bikaner Camel Corps patrols out in the desert. The warships in Lake Timsah signal with searchlights by day and mast-head lights by night. Out of all the messages we received there was not one of a warlike nature, and the Turks might be 1,000 miles away for all we know.

While on outpost duty we had to keep five rounds in the magazines of our rifles, and the sentries received instructions to shoot any dogs seen, as they might be carrying messages to the enemy. We were also given orders not to smoke on the sky-line at night time. This injunction seems ridiculous, as our Begby lamp can be seen and heard for miles, but the officer of the guard would not accept this explanation when he roared me up for having a smoke. "Playing soldiers," that's what I told him we were doing; and he reported me for insubordination, though it should have been for giving "lip."

Some members of the 30th Battalion, living in the glamour of the name won for Australia and New Zealand on Gallipoli by the Anzac Corps, seem to give themselves an air of superiority, really quite insupportable, over the British artillerymen, and also over the Bikaner Camel Corps, Hyderabad Lancers, Indian mountain battery, and Gyppo road-makers, who (along with some wandering Arabs) are the only other inhabitants of this sector of the outpost line.

What "gets" me and other Aussies about the Tommy we have so far met is the inordinate respect he pays to those of higher rank. The Bikaners are a superior and most dignified body of men, quite unlike the Hyderabad, whose begging ways are not far removed from those of the Gyppos.

At present our battalion has to supply the fatigue party for working the ferry punt, which is put into commission when the pontoon bridge is swung to the side of the Canal

in order to allow the passage of shipping between Suez and Port Said. As they work on the chains pulling the ferry across, they chant Aussie versions of the "hymns" the Gyppos sing to Allah; if that particular God has any influence in the hereafter, we are in for a rough time.

As the passenger ships pass by, we swim out for the good things the people throw us—tobacco, fruit, and drinks; and we have to be lively on the dive to grab them as they sink, and to use powerful strokes against the suction as that would draw us down towards the ship.

The colonel was standing in front of the telephone dugout waiting for the alarm to go at 8 p.m. when a ship came before his vision, the passengers promenading in evening dress. "My Gad! Sloan," he exclaimed, "what magnificently beautiful women! Oh—" but he got no farther, for the alarm sounded at that moment and so we were denied the opportunity of being entertained possibly with romantic verse.

The only signs of the Turkish attack of last February are a few of the steel pontoons which the enemy dragged across the desert. These were riddled with bullets, but we have stuffed p the holes with rags and they serve for the purpose of a short cruise. While on the signalling station we bought fish from the lake fishermen, and lived well despite my rotten cooking, for which I received ten piastres.

Yesterday two other signallers and myself were sent with, a reconnoitring company to an uninhabited oasis known as the "Markets," lying at the foot of some sand-hills about five miles from our camp. The Arabs and Bedouins meet here every Friday and barter or sell grain, fruit, horses, camels, donkeys, and goats. It is said that the Turks raided them on one occasion last winter, so we went out on the off-chance of a scrap. But after marching in battle order and carrying a heliograph over five miles of mostly loose sand, I didn't feel much like a box-on when we got there, yet, after some lunch, I was disappointed over the non-appearance of the Turks.

Compared with the men of the companies, we signallers are much more fortunate in our work. We don't have to dig trenches, rig barbed-wire entanglements, or do guards

and fatigues; when we have to take our place on the march with even more equipment than the company men, we feel like the office "rats" of the cities do after a day's digging in the garden.

Since we are not allowed leave to Ismailia, and when we are not on some signalling duty, the routine even to physical jerks is the same as before, there's nothing else to write about but chats, sand, and flies.

*Sunday, Jan. 2nd. 1916.*—We are back at FE. Covered in sand, I have just come off my two hours' shift. The wind is moving sand-hills at the rate of tons per second; it's the worst day we have so far experienced.

As we are short of field telephones, Barney and I were given special leave last Monday to have a "look around." So we went to Ismailia, and—after a good feed, washed down with several cups of delightful French coffee, and a few pints of beer—we succeeded, with the aid of a screw driver and a pair of wire-cutters, in borrowing from the town two phone sets which now, thanks to Mac and Cipher, have been remodelled and are giving service.

We nearly had our first casualty this week when one of the chaps cleaning his rifle let it go off. The bullet made several loud reports as it passed through four or five tents, and for the moment we thought the war had arrived.

C Company marched out on Wednesday last to Hill 353, where it is to remain for some time as an advance-guard for a surveying party. According to the news we have picked up from the signallers out there, the company is having a rough trot. It has to depend on a camel train for its supplies of bully-beef and biscuits and water, which arrive in very small quantities.

On Friday I went out to the Markets oasis again. When the company left on its return march, I remained behind to do a little job, and then, deciding that I would follow their tracks when the day was cooler, I had a sleep. When I awakened the sun was too near the west for me to have time to tramp back to camp. At first I welcomed the idea of a night out under the stars, but suddenly remembered I was due for duty on FE. Climbing a sand-hill I just had sufficient sun to call Eric up on the helio. "You silly young

—," he sent in Morse, but he promised to keep my absence dark.

That night I'll never forget. "Christmas day in the Work-house" had nothing on my New Year's Eve at the oasis. The ray of a warship's searchlight was my only joy, but it reminded me that the operators were looking for Turks—and had not this oasis been attacked? The howling of wild dogs did not add to my comfort, and I eventually laid clown to sleep with only one resolution—that I would never be a damned fool again.

The morning came at last, and, as I lifted my haversack that had served as a pillow, I disturbed my companion of the night, a queer looking thing, about ten inches long, which I have since learnt, was a scorpion. I had gone only about a mile of my way when I saw some camels making straight for me, and I was much relieved when they turned out to be a patrol of Bikaners under Lieutenant Subadar Johri Singh. He questioned me in perfect English, and, being satisfied with my replies, gave me a lift up behind him on his camel. I shall never forget that rocking ride on the ship of the desert so long as I live.

The patrol being out for the best part of the day, I again called p Eric at FE. Even the dignified Subadar, who could read Morse, laughed at the abuse that came flashing through the air. However, Eric assured me that I had not been missed, and, when I offered to do four shifts straight off upon my return, he Morsed T.A.R., which I wrongly interpreted to be an abbreviation for "That's all right."

As we bumped about the desert I talked in jerks to Johri Singh, who had been educated in an English university. Our conversation ranged from Australia and its "white" policy to the war and many other topics, and he was highly amused when I showed him, among others, a photo of my girl. Of course I asked him many questions, but he shut up like an oyster when I inquired if he was married. On arrival at our camp I thanked him for the trip as I rubbed my numbed seat, and accepted an invitation to attend his mess for dinner next Friday night.

*Thursday, Jan. 6th.*—H.M.S. *Glory* passed along from Port Said to-day. The queerest thing Mark Twain ever saw in the East was a man smashing stones with a shirt-front



—and that's what one of the Hyderabad Lancers has been doing to my clothes for the past two hours, in consideration for a few piastres. His treatment will at least bash the life out of the chats, if it does not otherwise make my rags clean.

Same old routine, two hours on and four off. Eric is in good trim to-night on half a bottle of whisky I souvenired from a passing ship and presented to him for keeping quiet about my night out. There's one thing about Eric, he can keep things to himself—and that's what he's done with the whisky.

*Sunday, Jan. 9th.*—We were relieved at FE on Friday. Duties since then have consisted of burying phone cable between here and Hill 353, and some telephone work in trenches. Yesterday I had a job repairing some of our cycles, which was preferable to drill after my wild time on Friday night.

The Bikaner officers' dinner of curry and other dishes has upset my tummie quite a lot. Of course Wal and I had to be sociable and "do as Rome does," so we joined with them in smoking the hubble-bubble pipe as it was passed around, and I had more than my first taste of whisky. Johri Singh worked overtime interpreting between us and his cobbers, and when the time arrived for us to take our leave (I also "took" an engraved Indian dish which I am sending home to Dad for an ash tray), Johri and his Bikaner braves cheered us out into the cold windy night. In the morning I woke up to find myself half-covered in sand in an old disused trench, and it was raining like blazes.

Rex, one of the reinforcement signallers, who has been away with mumps, gave me a lecture about the company I keep and my behaviour in getting drunk with the Bikaners and pinching a souvenir. So I have been, for a walk with Rex, Ron, and Reg this afternoon; after picking up some bullets and shrapnel near Lake Timsah, we waded out and swam to and around the French cruiser *Requin* but the Froggies did not invite us on board.

Plum pudding and apple jelly, the latter bought, for dinner to-day. H.M.S. *Jupiter* passed up Canal.

*Monday, Jan. 10th.*—Usual routine. Chats and flies getting worse. Had a ride on the donkeys this evening as they returned to the post from work on the road.

*Tuesday, Jan. 11th.*—Trying route march from 6.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Found an unexploded 15-pounder naval shell out on the march and lugged it all the way back to camp.

[Beyond this bald entry, Ted failed' to record the events of this day in his diary, but a cobber bridges the gap:

"The boys returning to the tent after a swim found him trying to screw the time-fuse off the shell. They promptly tossed him out and the shell also, which he took to the Indian mountain battery. On his return, he placed the time-fuse in his haversack and when he commenced poking into the opening of the shell, he was tossed out again and not allowed to return. It was just getting dusk when he pinched our only candle from underneath the tent and we chased him up the hill. He had a little accident near the cookhouse, removed his short pants and, with his shirt waving in the breeze, raced us to the Canal. The last we saw of him that evening, he was walking along the other side of the Canal with pants in hand, and singing about his little grey home in the west. He spent that night at the telephone dugout where he and the orderly, after drinking a wash-basin of Gyppo beer, had an argument over twenty 'disasters,' and the others, wanting to get rid of them, suggested they have a race across the Canal. Ted, however, was the only one away—running down the steep bank, he swam across and was half-way back when he got cramps in the stomach, and was carried with the current down to the next station. Here they fished him out and Rex and the boys brought him back to life, only to hear him say he was going to get even on the 'cows.' That was about one in the morning, and, apart from being nearly drowned, he might have stopped a bullet, for the sentries were only too glad of a chance to shoot."

The sequel to this was about a week later when, following up his argument with the orderly and receiving the worse of a fight on the jetty, he dragged his opponent into the Canal and almost drowned him.]

*Wednesday, Jan. 12th.*—Had another night out last night. Attended my first army sick parade this morning. Dr Morelle ordered medicine and duty. "Paint 'is back wiv iodine and give 'im one of dese and one of dose," he said. ("One of dese and one of dose" were a No. 9 pill and a smaller one.) The duty turned out to be a day's skirmishing in the sand.

Received a nice parcel addressed to a "lonely Anzac" from a dear old lady of Western Australia. Pudding, writing pad, toffee, cigarettes, and tin of cheese (wish it was a tin of insecticide); and rather than disappoint her I enclosed a note in the envelope already addressed for the reply:

*Dear missus thank you for the parsel the puddin was very nice i give the fags to my cobber bill a lonely Anzac to because I don't smoke the lollies nice to and we dont get no bungo ere ether bills just ad is arm blowd orf so e arsts me to thank you for the fags aint kild no Turks to day but we are winnin the war orlrite not noin nuthing about rightin and thankin you agane an opin this findes you as it leays me at present will call an see you cumin ome from dinkiedye Bill Adams.*

*Thursday, Jan. 13th.*—Rain, wind, and cold. Four signallers went with A Company out to Hill 353 and back to-day. They say the boys of C Company call the valley where they are camped "Pinchgut."

*Friday, Jan. 14th.*—Received a mail from home. Mother wants to know if I will ever regret taking up arms to defend my country. Oh no, I'll never regret it, but that little question has served to remind me why I'm here. If marching with a load of some seventy pounds in the sand and heat of the desert, standing at attention when you want to scratch a chat, eating boiled fat bacon, damned hard biscuits, salt bully-beef and an occasional luxury from home or the canteen—but otherwise having a good time, swimming and drinking and swearing and laughing—means defending your country, well I suppose it will do me, yet I would feel more satisfied if we could have a battle now and then to relieve the monotony and justify our existence. However, there's no need to go into that detail when answering Mother's question. I'll just say "I shall never regret doing my bit, I'm having a bonzer time."

Received 100 "disaster" pay, equivalent to £1 os. 7d. Spent quarter of it on tinned fruit and Ideal milk.

*Saturday, Jan. 15th.*—Nothing different.

*Sunday, Jan. 16th.*—Much the same. Church parade in morning, unloading water pipes in afternoon. The latest chorus to the tune of "Boys of the Dardanelles" runs:

*Boys of the Suez Canal,  
Who say they will and shall  
Give the Turks the time of their lives,  
Drink their wine and run off with their wives,  
Australia wants the very best from you,  
Though you're fed on cheese and stew,  
With jam once a week,  
And pack drill if you squeak,  
Boys of the great Canal.*

*Monday, Jan. 17th.*—O.C. Stan had us out in front of the trenches this morning for physical jerks. After giving us a most severe scolding, he ordered double. So off we went faster and faster, straight back to breakfast, leaving Stanley shouting unheard orders out in the sand. We should he crimed for this, but Stan won't take the risk of his competence being questioned. In the essential duties we give him of our best, but we just can't stand his treating us like a lot of school-boys practising for an Empire Day drill-display.

*Tuesday, Jan. 18th.*—Hospital ship from Aussie passed up Canal. Had a box-on to-day and received a bonzer black eye.

*Wednesday, Jan. 19th.*—Had another game of soldiers. Dud C. was the flank man for fixing bayonets, but as his bayonet was rusted into the scabbard he just went through the actions, and now the signallers are the laughing stock of the battalion.

*Thursday, Jan. 20th.*—Buried cable during day. On outpost duty at night—Jim J. in charge. He slept well all night, so might have we for all that did not happen.

*Friday, Jan. 21st.*—Back at FE for a week. Built a dugout with a fire-place, but chimney smokes a treat. Pinched

coal from railway. Received mail from home, parcel still on the way.

*Saturday, Jan. 22nd.*—This afternoon two persons dressed ostensibly as New Zealand officers took photos from both sides of the Canal. I told Eric they looked like spies, and he is going to report the matter. Darned my socks and sewed up the tops of Eric's. Our boys beat a team from H.M.S. Cornwallis at soccer to-day.

*Sunday, Jan. 23rd.*—First parcel from home. Tobacco, socks, chocolate, tooth paste, chat comb, boracic acid, liver pills, chewing gum, and cake of soap with a note "Wash me, mother dear."

*Monday, Jan. 24th.*—The 5th A.I. Brigade (17th, 18th, 19th and 20th Battalions) from Gallipoli came over the Canal. In their faded, ragged uniforms they look a worn out lot and they did not take the least interest in our cheers. It seems they are past cheering or caring. In fact they look like a mob of sheep, but I guess they would make us look silly if the Turks attacked to-night. Tom H. of the 20th, twin brother to Reg on our station, visited us. He said very little about the "Peninsh" and just answered our questions in a vague sort of way, but his appearance was eloquent enough to cause us to feel admiration for his service there and regrets for what we had missed.

*Tuesday, Jan. 25th.*—Wild and stormy last night. One of C Company at Hill 353 shot himself through the leg.

*Wednesday, Jan. 26th.*—5th Brigade marched out to Hill 353, where they are to have a little "holiday" in the sand after their work at Anzac.

*Thursday, Jan. 27th.*—Eric had forgotten to report the N.Z. "spies," who turned up again today. We had an argument about calling out the guard to put them under arrest, but Eric decided to go and see the O.C. first. The way those two "N.Zs" hopped it convinced me they were spies, and Eric's order to arrest them was much too late.

*Friday, Jan. 28th.*—Relieved 3.30 p.m. at FE.

*Saturday, Jan. 29th.*—On duty at phone dugout from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., Sunday.

*Sunday, Jan. 30th.*—C Company returned from Hill 353 looking almost as bad as their Anzac relief. Peter K. left to join his brother in the 1st Division Artillery. The Hyderabad Lancers also left this post.

*Monday, Jan. 31st.*—Pay-day. One of the chaps got his and then reported his complaint to the M.O. He's now behind barbed-wire. Rotten luck. Wish I could see him again before he's sent away, for he was a good cobbler.

*Tuesday, Feb. 1st.*—Took the patient some chops for breakfast—crawled the last 200 yards and dropped them in the sand as I was struggling under the barbed-wire. He shared the cold and sanded chops with two others in the tent, and then said: "See what you didn't get for not doin' as I did but doin' as I told yer. Now yer young b—, get goin' out o' this afore they grabs yer. Keep out o' trouble till I sees yer again—so long, old timer."

*Wednesday, Feb. 2nd.*—The 6th and 7th Infantry Brigades and rest of the 5th—all Anzacs—came over the Canal to-day. A limber fell into the Canal from the pontoon bridge and some chaps dived in to try and free the horses. (The Q.M. blames this accident for the loss of several tons of stores, whereas a limber holds only about half a ton.)

*Thursday, Feb. 3rd.*—Battalion went for picnic march to Ismailia. We had some sports in the Gardens, and I enjoyed a rock-melon more than anything I have ever had.

We are leaving Ferry Post on Sunday. With three brigades now at the post, in place of a single battalions it looks as though a war or something is expected, and I suppose that's why they are shifting us out of the way. Alan's latest furphy—we are to each receive the Khedive's Star from the Egyptian Government for defending the Canal and the men of C Company will get a bar for Hill 353.

"Kossey," our Gyppo servant, is much upset over our leaving. We have given him a reference which he keeps wrapped in oiled silk. It goes something like this:

To warn those whom it may concern. *Saida Wallaheds*  
(Good-day, fellows)—

The bearer, "Kossey," through whose finger marks you may be able to read this, is a—. There are only three —s in

Egypt and he's all of them. He has robbed us of our *velouse* (money), pinched our *mungare* (food), and is always begging *baksheesh*. There's not enough water in the Canal to wash the dirt off him, nor will his following of flies ever clean his eyes or die of starvation. His one qualification is not being *magnoon* (mad) like us in joining the army. Give him a trial kick in the — and watch him *imshi igri* (go quickly). We are leaving him *bookra* (to-morrow) and wish him a soldier's farewell.

*Mafeesh* (finish).

"*Quice kateer, quice kateer*" ("very nice, very nice"), Kossey says, as he shows this document to his prospective employers, and of course they give him the boot. Perhaps I'm a bit soft, but somehow I feel sorry for the poor cow.



## CHAPTER IX. TEL-EL-KEBIR

Body snatching—A night in two-up fairyland—Old pals—Barney's swan song—The 5th Division—A cook with a tail light—Raspberry jam and beer—Rank bacon—Looking for spies—Rural Egypt—The Prince of Wales—A buckshee corporal—Hog's Back—The 14th and 15th Brigades and Tivey's Chocolates.

(4 February-31 March 1916)

*Wednesday, March 15th, 1916.*—We have just been inoculated and have two days off duty, so I'll take the opportunity of writing up events since leaving Ferry Post on 6 February, when we marched to Moascar and thence came by train to Tel-el-Kebir. Tel-el-Kebir is situated

about thirty miles west of Ismailia, and sixty miles east of Cairo, on the main railway running parallel with the sweet-water canal. This canal runs from the Nile near Cairo through the Wadi Tumilat and into Lake Timsah.

It was here in 1882 that General Wolseley defeated Arabi Pasha, since when Egypt has been under the control of England. Although the battle of Tel-el-Kebir was fought thirty-four years ago, the trenches are still in existence, and material, uniforms, guns, and bullets may be dug out of the sand. Digging up the well-preserved skeletons of Gyppos has been stopped since the buglers of our battalion decorated the outside of their tent with a number of skulls and bones in their effort to win the competition for the best dressed tent. I wonder if, some thirty years hence, my bones will be dug out of a battlefield and used to cheer up the soldiers of that time.

The best feature of this camp is the generally hard surface of the ground, which though in places rough with pebbles, is much better to march on than the loose sand of the Sinai desert. In this encampment, a long belt of bell-tents along the northern side of the railway, there are about 50,000 Australians, including some 30,000 of the newly formed 4th and 5th Divisions. Between the lines of tents and the matting mess-huts is a long laneway, with a wider space between the huts and a long row of Gyppo shops that has sprung up since we came here. Parallel with these are the road, the railway, and the sweet-water canal, with much cultivation stretching from its southern bank.

At night many thousands of troops gather in the space between the huts and shops to play or look on at two-up, crown and anchor, housie-housie and other such games. The thousands of flickering candles and smoky slush-lamps make a sight one will never forget. Nor will I forget my own experience there last night. With 200 piastres in my pocket, and with the intention of purchasing some souvenirs, I was passing through this fairyland of lights when my attention was drawn to a game of crown and anchor. Somehow I couldn't go wrong, and, after winning about 500 "disasters," I left with the proprietor calling me all kinds of a — for "buttoning up." Trouble is I didn't button up enough sufficiently to prevent my pocket from being picked bare while I was walking to the shops. What a gutzer to be rich one minute and broke the next. On the



way back I got into the inner circle of a two-up school just in time to go down on the cash when someone called "Jacks!" In the ensuing scramble I got hold of a 50-disaster note as well as receiving a perfect uppercut that almost knocked me out.

Most evenings I spend looking up old coppers, some from Anzac and others just recently arrived from Aussie. With six of the old Burwood schoolboys I had a wonderful time one night. We talked of the good old school-days, and it was just like being back there to hear them calling me "Mutton." How I wish we could all be in the one section, particularly now that, with the exception of six of the old hands, the original signal section of the 30th has been split up. Some have gone to the 5th Division Signallers and others to the artillery. Barney has sung his swan song—"Farmer Brown 'e 'ad a little farm down on the E.I.O., and on that farm 'e 'ad some goats, down on the E.I.O."—to we who are staying on in the infantry—the P.B.I. ("poor bloody infantry"), he calls it—and he is now in a pioneer battalion. Reg H. has joined his brother Tom in the 20th Battalion; Rex F., Reg C., and Ron C. are now signallers in the 8th Machine-Gun Company; and our O.C. (Stan E.) is on the divisional staff. I could have had a transfer to the divisional signallers, but I much prefer to stay with the old battalion, though I would have gone to the machine-gun company if I'd had the chance.

The last five weeks have seen many changes. The 29th, 30th, 31st, and 32nd Battalions are now together as the 8th Brigade for the first time, and with the 14th and 15th Brigades, which have been formed from Anzacs and surplus reinforcements—together with artillery, engineers, machine-gunners, signallers, pioneers, medical and a few other specialist units—comprise the new 5th Australian Division, now awaiting its G.O.C., Major-General M'Cay.

We have had an inspection by our brigadier (General Tivey), a march past a general "Brasshat," and an inspection by General Birdwood, who has given us his orders regarding discipline. On important parades such as these all hands, including the cooks, have to turn out. One chap, who had not been on a parade for some time, fell in with half a candle sticking to the entrenching tool at his rear, and of course someone had to light it. "Fall out that

man with the candle!" ordered an officer, but no one moved. "That man with the candle, take two paces forward!" Still no one moved. "You!" (pointing to the man). "Damn you, fall out!" But it was not until he burnt his inquiring fingers on his tail light that the luckless offender fell out.

Met Norman H. the other day, and he gave me an introduction to a chap in the A.S.C. who is looking after my inner man. I go on my cycle to see him every night, and when I return with fresh bread, raspberry jam, cooked meat, and other luxuries, Eric is always waiting for me on the railway embankment with a couple of bottles of beer. We have a good feed, go to the camp pictures or to see a fight, or perhaps have a flutter at two-up, and then feeling well satisfied, with the work of the day forgotten, we sleep.

Our rations continue to be much the same: for breakfast—boiled fat bacon, porridge, and sometimes bread; for dinner (if we are not out on a march)—stew, curry, etc.; for tea—cheese, biscuits, and jam. Have seen Eric at one sitting eat more than a pound of cheese with four or five army biscuits ("Anzac wafers").

The morning rush on the bacon dixie is the event of the day. If you come late you naturally get a "blank file;" if you happen to land a piece with one streak of lean, it's a "lance-corporal;" but, no matter how early you arrive, you usually get a "private" (all fat). A "brigadier-general" (all lean) has not yet been seen. But, despite the tucker and hard work, we continue to put on solid condition.

While on a route march a dispatch rider caught up with the column with orders for the signallers who saw the "N.Z. spies" to be sent back to camp. On the way thither we had a few pot-shots and made some Gyppos hop it over the sky-line. Receiving instructions, we took our cycles on the mail train to Ismailia and reported at Army Headquarters, where we were asked if we could identify the N.Z. officers, and were then told to go and look for them. After a most enjoyable hour or two in Ismailia, we decided that it was a hopeless task, so split up to go our own ways.

I went out about ten miles to the roadhead on the other side of the Canal, where I got a lift on a camel and visited the positions known as Mt Kembla, Mt Keira, Australia Hill, Mt Katoomba, and Hog's Back, and then came back by road to the railhead whither my bike had been returned in a limber. During the trip I met a number of old cobbers to whom I showed my magic Army Headquarters pass; they were much interested, but, when I told them I was now a lieutenant in the secret service, they sang: "His cobbers don't believe him, for he's a bloody liar." That night I spent at Ferry Post, had a swim in the morning, and, after reporting back to Ismailia, returned to Tel-el-Kebir with Eric, to tell the boys many lies about how we bagged the spies.

Most of the chaps have had leave to Cairo, but I never seem to have enough cash to manage it—anyhow, I don't like Cairo, sour grapes perhaps. However, I had an interesting day with Rex and Co. before they left the battalion. With special leave we went on our cycles to visit the other side of the sweet-water canal. Entering a little village, we were at first received in much the same manner as the day when Barney and I went out from Cairo, but when the head man saw that we were genuinely interested and had a few piastres to spare, he showed us round.

We found the insides of the dwellings to be as drab as the exteriors. A few split palm trunks serve to support the flat roofs, the interior walls are of the same mud colour as the outsides, and very little light comes through the slits of windows. A few worn mats lie upon the mud floors where perhaps a bed made of palm branches and a number of earthenware pots are the only furnishings. The guide says "*Quice kateer!*" and we answer "*Quice,*" wondering how long it will take the fowls we hear to scratch through the roof.

Next we are shown an incubator, and learn that the fowls in Egypt do not sit. Eggs, coarse maize bread, and vegetables seem to be the only foods, but the Gyppos must have a taste for meat, for I have seen many of them diving their hands into our rubbish tins in search of chunks of it.

A group of smiling children looked happy enough in their ragged clothes and bare feet, as they stood beneath some

sheltering palms watching us inspect their domain. The sight of the women covering up their heads and turning away made me feel sorry for their pathetic life, but I suppose they knock out a bit of fun when there's a marriage, a birth-feast, a funeral, or a circumcision. Boys must be in great demand, for the last-mentioned event takes the form of a procession from the home to the barber's shop where the operation is performed, and then the guests all have a great feast upon returning to the boy's home. I forgot to ask how the barber gets on for a procession if he has a son, but that is probably another case of the bootmaker's kid being the worst shod.

The intensive cultivation reminds me somewhat of the Chow's gardens on the Cook's River flats at home, where we used to pole up in bulrush rafts and pinch their vegetables. The Gyppos, while thorough, are most primitive in their farming. Water is drawn from the sweet-water canal to the irrigation channels by means of the *shaduf* (a pole swinging between two posts), with a mud counterweight at one end, and a bucket at the other. This is worked by hand and, where the water is low, as many as six Gyppos may be seen working *shadufs*, one above the other up the bank. In some places a spiral hand-worked pump is used; in others a buffalo may be seen going round and round driving a wooden cog-wheel which operates, by means of other such wheels, an elevating wheel of water-pots. A wooden one-furrow plough, as evolved umpteen B.C., is still used. A camel, together with a donkey or a buffalo in double harness drawing a plough or some other antiquated farming implement is quite a common sight.

After seeing such conditions of life it makes one feel that our civilization is worth fighting for. And that reminds me, I have been in the army about eight months now and feel further away from the war than ever I did. The thoughts I had of fighting are like the mirages we see on the desert. We go on and on towards them but never get there. We are just living for the day, and have long since lost the habit of dreaming and looking back. But for a few moments at sunset or perhaps on a church parade, it is seldom I think of home, and then it is only to form some hazy vision of the past. Looking into the future it is only to think of the feed of juicy steak I'll have when I get home and—well, that's about all. I feel as though I was born in the army and, despite the hard life, I like it.

Perhaps the effects of inoculation and heat of the day are making me a bit soft in the "nut," for I can hear a chap two tents away cursing the army for all he's worth. Perhaps that, too, is the result of the inoculation.

*Sunday, March 19th.*—We were issued with our colour patches to-day—purple and gold. The purple stands for the battalion, the gold for the brigade. This is a most important event. It is the finishing touch to our uniform and brings a thrill of pride. It reminds me of final leave in Aussie when we decorated our shoulders with blue and gold ribbons, for, like niggers or boy scouts, we just had to have a bit of distinctive colour.

*Wednesday, March 22nd.*—A red-letter day. We have been inspected by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales. After the parade we crowded down to the road to get a close look at our young Prince as he rode by on his horse, accompanied by General Birdwood and staff. The Prince is serving, as a lieutenant, with a British regiment, and I think we like him better for this than if he'd turned out as a field-marshal. With an English complexion, he looked very young, and I thought rather tired. There was nothing stiff about the manner in which he rode by on his horse and received our many cheers. "He'll do me," I heard someone say, and those few words may be taken as an expression of our general opinion.

We are leaving here to-morrow. The 5th Division is taking over part of the Canal defence, and I hope we'll get some stoush this time. The 8th Brigade ("Tivey's Chocolates," they call us) is going by train to Ismailia, and the 14th and 15th Brigades have to march.

Looking over my notes of Tel-el-Kebir, the twenty-round fight between Rowan and Kavanagh, both of the 29th Battalion, stands out as being the most important event. The death of a sergeant in the 31st Battalion, who was shot through the eye at sighting practice, was, I believe, our only casualty. Sighting practice is carried out with dummy cartridges, but somehow a live cartridge got among the dummies, and resulted in a most unfortunate accident.

We have received gifts from the 30th Battalion Comforts Fund in Sydney. Its members must spend much time and

money, and our appreciation is based on more than the material value of the gifts. Thoughtfulness such as this reminds one that war is even worse for the folk at home than it is for us. To them the war must be one long agony of suspense, whereas for us it is a life of hardship mixed with lots of amusement, but by taking each as it comes we know not the mental anguish of suspense.

*Sunday, March 26th.*—We arrived at Ferry Post last Thursday evening, and expect to be moved out to the front line within the next few days. I have been made a lance-corporal and feel very proud of my right sleeve with its one stripe sewn below the crossed-flag badge of the signallers. Standing with these embellishments nearest the camera and trying to ignore the chaps calling out "Buckshee Corp," I heard Tom say I looked like Linoleum about to cross the Alps in an open boat.

The Adjutant, Captain S., sent for me this morning. On my way to report to him I could not think of any recent wrongdoing, so, concluding that it had to do with my promotion, I gave him a smart salute and was much surprised to hear him enquire after my health. It turns out that his sister of the Comforts Fund had asked him to keep an eye on me, and he told me to come and see him if I am ever in difficulties. His little talk gave me a feeling more satisfactory than if he had handed me another two stripes, and, forgetting myself, I shook hands instead of saluting as I left. He's a good old sport, but I'll bet he'd go crook if he knew my age.

*Monday, March 27th.*—Had a go at riding an unbroken mule to-day, but fell off when we crashed into a bell-tent and knocked it over. A Gyppo paper boy had just gone up the line towards the colonel's tent singing out "Gypshun Mail, to-morrow's paper, verra good news; Mr K. got a jack-in-the-box."

*Tuesday, March 28th.*—The swimming at Ferry Post was too good to last. Following a night in the open we moved off at 7 a.m., and arrived at Hog's Back after a ten-mile march, temperature 102° in the shade, but no shade and no water. Relieved New Zealand Rifle Brigade.

*Wednesday, March 29th.*—A section of C Company was pulled out last night to carry cases of beer to the officers'

mess. About 1 a.m. a cobbler of mine brought me a bottle from a case he 'has buried in the sand. We got an issue of water this morning. Hear that a number of the 14th Brigade died on the march from Tel-el-Kebir.

Later. Am returning to Ferry Post with a few others to go to Zeitoun Signalling School for a three weeks' course. Verra good news indeed.

*Friday, March 31st.*—At Ferry Post. Have seen a lot of the 14th Brigade after their awful march. They look even worse than did the troops upon their return from Gallipoli, and we have heard much of 'their trying experience. They have not a good word for those responsible for the march, but they are full of praise for the New Zealanders who went out voluntarily from Moascar and helped them in. The 15th Brigade arrived to-day and, although they have had a better march, they all look knocked up. They rub it into us about being "Tivey's Chocolates," but I fail to see how the inhuman treatment they have received will make them any better in action than we "Chocolates." Leaving here to-morrow.

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## CHAPTER X. GRAINS OF SAND

Back to school—The Pyramids and the Sphinx—The sergeant's welcome—Bench Mark—A few hot days—Ridge Post—A leaking boat—A poisoned foot and a final flutter.

(1 April-15 June, 1916)

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*Sunday, April 2nd, 1916.*—Arrived at Zeitoun Imperial School of Instruction yesterday afternoon. The only item of interest was the dining saloon on the Cairo express, where we spent most of our time and a good deal of cash. Changing trains at Cairo and hiring a car at Zeitoun, we arrived at the school in first class style and found everything to be to our liking. Bunks to sleep on, separate mess-huts, and every modern convenience. Also good food and a fair amount of leave. We start work to-morrow. I'm in the visual school. But at the moment I'm off to Cairo for the day with Tom H., who is in the telephone school.

*Monday, April 3rd.*—Had a good day yesterday. Went over some of the old ground in Cairo, which is much more quiet now there are only a few troops about. The Wazir is almost deserted of troops and prices have been lowered in the keenness of trade. Tom and I rode through this place on our donkeys, and I was glad not to be alone. We found much to interest us as we went leisurely through the different bazaars, and, after a good dinner at St James Hotel, went out to the Pyramids.

With a good guide, though I cannot vouch for his truthfulness, we climbed the 470 feet to the top of Cheops Pyramid. Some of the stones are five feet high, and despite my good condition I knocked at the knees more than once during the climb. At one time the Pyramids were covered with smooth alabaster, a semi-transparent stone, but this, with the exception of the capping on Chephren's Pyramid, was afterwards used in the building of Cairo. Cheops, built over 6000 years ago, is said to cover thirteen acres of land and to contain 88,500,000 cubic feet of stone. This is all so much beyond one's comprehension that it makes one feel of no more importance on the map than a fly, and yet when having my photograph taken on its top I did not forget to show my one little stripe.

Looking over the Nile valley to the east, Cairo in its setting at the foot of violet hills presents a view in marked contrast to the rippling sand-dunes of the Libyan Desert in the opposite direction. Descending to the sands below, our guide next took us to Cheops' sepulchre. At the entrance we took off our boots, not because of reverence, but on account of the polished slippery ramp going steeply down under the Pyramid. Slipping and sliding down into



the darkness with but the light of one candle, we then ascended to the tomb, an extensive vault with a bare stone sarcophagus surrounded by the dim forms of a number of Aussies cracking jokes and chipping bits off for souvenirs. We learnt that one piece of granite measured 15 x 5 x 7 feet. After paying a few piastres to see the vault lit up with magnesium light, the troops in the complete darkness made the most weird yells and war-cries I have ever heard, putting the wind up the guides. When the candles were re-lit we found our guide shaking like a leaf in Cheops' sarcophagus.

We then had a look at the Sphinx of Gizeh, which for some 5000 years has gazed across the valley of the Nile, and we were informed that in 1798 one of Napoleon's gunners had souvenired a large chunk off its nose. The Temple of the Sphinx, with granite walls and an alabaster floor, that is gradually finding its way to Aussie through the post, was otherwise uninteresting to us who had had enough Egyptian archaeology for one day.

After an enjoyable tea at the Pyramids Hotel, we went to church service at the Y.M.C.A., Esbekia Gardens, and then back home. I say home and mean it, for this signalling school is a home away from the dinky die home we call the battalion. I wonder if D. has finished off that case of beer?

The thoroughness and discipline of the British Army is reflected in this school, where after only one day's work everything is going as smoothly as clockwork. The subjects of the course include Morse buzzer, lamp, heliograph, and flag signalling, map-reading, field sketching, telephone work and cable laying, and in the final practical and theory examinations 90 per cent is a pass. Unless there's something to growl about I won't bother writing up my daily progress, but will get stuck into the work and see if I can pull off a first-class pass (95 per cent).

*Friday, April 21st.*—The school is finished. I have just had a last look at Cairo and am returning to the battalion tomorrow with my first-class signaller's certificate. Tom came first in the telephone school and I fluked the same place in the visual with 99.7 per cent. Not a bad showing for the rough Aussies in competition with Tommy regulars and others—and what-o the 30th. Wonder how

well I would have passed if it had been a real practical test with shells and other things flying about—passed out with fright perhaps.

Met three signallers—Toc P., Chook F., and Lizz L.—of our second reinforcements in the school. They don't seem to belong to anyone so I am taking the responsibility of introducing them to the battalion. Don't know how I'll get them through without passes, but will give it a go.

Had charge of a section at the school one day and was almost sacked and returned to my unit for taking them to an ostrich farm, where we tried to ride the birds until one of our number was taken to hospital with a kick in the stomach. Got even on the British student officer who reported me, for I made him a runner on my station the following day and I must say he ran well at 105° in the shade.

Hear that we are going to France soon. The sooner the better, as I'm fed up with this land of the three S's. There's a farewell party on to-night, so here goes.

*Sunday, April 23rd.*—Staging Camp, Ferry Post. Believing that the reinforcement signallers would be put under arrest if we detrained at Ismailia, we hopped off the wrong side of the train at Moascar last night, and evaded the guard. Wal C., Alf B., Viv M., Toc P., Chook F., and Lizz L. then fell into two deep, and I marched them past the guard on the sweet-water canal bridge, calling a cheery good-night as I waved a handful of paper with my pass on the top.

The further we went the more Toc growled, but it was lucky for him, and (for that matter) all of us, that we found the battalion about midnight only a mile over the Suez Canal instead of ten miles out at Hog's Back. The sergeant was most annoyed when I woke him up, but when I introduced the three new signallers he went raving mad and called me the biggest bloody bumptious basket in the battalion. That's nothing to what I think of him—the lousy cow.

We are packing up to move into Ferry Post tomorrow, where the battalion is to take over the garrison duties for a week.

*Monday, April 24th.*—Bench Mark, an outpost a few miles north of Ferry Post on the Suez Canal. Came here with a platoon and am in charge of the telephone signalling station with two signallers. The platoon is camped at the foot of the Canal bank and our dugout is at the top. We brought a good supply of canteen tucker with us, and, if the rats don't get it, we are in for a good time. Spent most of the day making things ship-shape, and now, having done an hour over my watch of four hours—it's 1 a.m. Tuesday, or 0100 in military parlance—I'll wake Harry C., who is talking in his sleep. Wilkie is trying to snore his head off.

*Tuesday, April 25th.*—From the dugout down to the O.C.'s tent we have rigged up a tight wire, on which we pull up and let down a jam tin with messages. This saves a lot of sweat running up and down the steep bank. The O.C. reckons it a good idea, and we're proud of the job. Four hours on and eight off, swimming and eating—Harry's a good cook. This is the life.

The Turks attacked a few miles north of here on the 23rd. Our aeroplanes go over every day. Camels are used to sweep a broad smooth track in the sand and this is inspected every morning for footprints. Sentries patrol this side of the Canal every night and everything is in readiness for a box-on. A light railway has been run out about six miles from Ferry Post, and the made roads continue some few miles beyond the railhead. It is all very interesting, but I cannot understand why, if there are Turks out there, we don't go out and have a crack at them.

*Wednesday, April 26th.*—I was pulling a kerosene tin of water up our tight wire to-day, when the drawing cable snapped and the tin shot down, throwing its contents all over the O.C., who was writing a letter below. His complimentary remarks have elevated me far beyond the status given me by the sergeant. However, he's a forgiving cuss, as his visit here with cigarettes to-night proved—but perhaps that's because he likes our coffee. Anyhow he tells a good yarn, and I like him very much.

Usual duties and routine to-day. Have just made up my register—and now come on, Harry, get these ear-phones on, for I'm off to bed.

*Thursday, April 27th.*—Nothing out of the box to-day. Communications regular and bowels more so.

*Friday, April 28th.*—Went into Ferry Post and returned with mail and a parcel from home. Harry's got a ton of patience—for over an hour he waited, knife in hand, to stick a rat, and Wilkie went crook when it bled all over his pack. Harry is determined to keep me awake to-night, he's making pancakes and singing "Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake." He's a "babbling brook" all right, but mostly "babble" when it comes to pancakes.

*Saturday, April 29th.*—Have had all my clothes in the sun, so, except for my sun helmet, have been naked all day.

*Sunday, April 30th.*—Wrote letters home. Received orders to proceed to staging camp when relieved to-morrow. All good things come to an end. I wonder how I'll get on when route marching after three weeks at the school and one week here.

*Monday, May 1st.*—Relieved at Bench Mark 0900, and marched to staging camp. Had buzzer practice in afternoon and usual swim. Our colonel is the only one with a swimming costume among the thousands of naked troops who all get into the water if a passenger ship goes by. The American ships with their neutral colours, stars and stripes, plastered from stem to stern attract much attention. The boys call out: "Got another note from Wilson?" and "Who put the fish-hooks in our bully?" Warnings were issued in orders some time ago to look out for fish-hooks in a certain brand of bully-beef from the Goldarn States.

*Tuesday, May 2nd.*—Up at 0400 (4 a.m.), leaned rifle and got ready for brigade march. Fell in and moved off 0500 to railhead, where we took up our position in a scheme to defend the Canal. Returned in afternoon and had a good swim.

*Wednesday, May 3rd.*—Signallers on a battalion communication scheme in morning and buzzer practice in afternoon. Another parcel from home—air pillow, socks, soap, fags, etc.; the air pillow has given me an idea for the next route march—I'll try it out in my pack.

Went to see Rex, Ron, and Reg in the 8th Machine-Gun Company. But for the flies and their corporal (ex-batman) Toc R., they are having a good time. It seems that Toc's two "buckshee" stripes got him a job of which he knows nothing. He makes me feel 100 "disasters" in debt every time I see him. It's just as well for them they have their own good fellowship to keep them from going mad in his company. I've never seen Toc in for a swim, but I'll swear he's got legs on his belly.

*Thursday, May 4th.*—Usual routine and less water. I'm orderly corporal and have just been in charge of a sick parade. The M.O. ordered m. and d. in every case and, when he had finished, he said to me: "I wonder how many of those chaps called me a bastard?" "I wonder," was my only reply. Of course there's always a big sick parade previous to a route march, yet a few did look crook to me—yes, "I wonder."

*Friday, May 5th.*—Usual long battalion route march. Put air pillow in my pack instead of its real belongings, which I buried temporarily in our tent. Too damned tired to walk a mile for a swim—where's this blasted war? What are we here for?

*Saturday, May 6th.*—The whole division went out on a stunt to-day. The mounted troops seemed to enjoy it very much, but I reckon I enjoyed my evening pint more than they. I was complimented on the squareness of my pack, but someone stuck a pin in it before we returned and now I'm in disgrace.

*Sunday, May 7th.*—Another church parade, another swim, and another bonzer parcel from home: ½lb. tobacco, soap, tooth brush, washers, socks, balaclava cap, cheese, chocolate, sausages, malt, pipe, buttons, pills, bovril, cotton, in fact everything I want.

*Monday, May 8th.*—Just heard of withdrawal of Turkey and Bulgaria. Great cheering and excitement in camp. Also news that French have advanced 17 miles on a 50-mile front. Looks as though the war's over, worse luck.

*Tuesday, May 9th.*—That must have been a furphy last night. I'll bet it came from Rubberneck in the artillery. The 8th Brigade marched out and "attacked" Hill 147 to-day, and of course defeated the "enemy."

*Wednesday May 10th.*—Must be something doing at last. We hear that Turks have attacked, and battalion has received orders to be ready to move off at any time. There's much talk and speculation on events, but housie-housie etc. carry on as usual.

*Thursday, May 11th.*—Received new mark iv high-velocity rifle and 120 rounds mark vii ammunition. As the Turks are expected to attack to-morrow, we are preparing to move off at midnight so that we'll be in time to bid them good morning.

*Friday, May 12th.*—The division marched out at 0030 (12.30 a.m.) in artillery formation, but, nothing doing, returned to camp 0800. Swimming parade in afternoon.

*Saturday, May 13th.*—Only 108° in the shade today, and no water from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. Received a tin of lollies and some chewing gum from T.—God bless her. Am going out on lamp parade to-night.

*Sunday, May 14th.*—Church parade at 7.30 a.m. Rest of the day in Canal. Two of our boys (one belonging to the 30th Battalion) were drowned to-day. One was dragged under a liner and has not been seen since.

*Monday, May 15th.*—Funeral in morning. Heliograph parade and swim in afternoon. No drinking water all day, temperature 110°. Khamsin blew sand all over the place, the stew being full of it.

*Tuesday, May 16th.*—Up at 3 a.m. After a "cup" of tea, brigade moved off at 4.45 in full marching order (pack, rifle, 120 rounds, etc., about 70 lb. in all). About seven miles out on the road we turned on to the desert and engaged in a mock attack, after which we were inspected by the G.O.C. We then did another attack, running and falling down in the loose sand, before returning across the desert. About half the battalion fell out on the way back—and so did I, about two miles from "home." Just managed to get to the water tank. Official temperature 115° but it's been well over 130° in this tent. Lots of chaps have been sent to hospital.

*Wednesday, May 17th.*—No parades, for it's too hot. Official temperature 117°, and 122° in our matting hut. Was paid 200 "disasters."

*Thursday, May 18th.*—Like Murdoch's, it's still rising, but only to 118° official to-day. Damn near dead, and covered with flies.

*Sunday, May 21st.*—Things are better, wind and heat having dropped and flies are not so sticky. For a week from to-morrow the battalion will be the Ferry Post garrison. Hope I get a station on the Canal.

*Monday, May 22nd.*—Ridge Post is like Bench Mark, only farther from Ferry Post. An underground sap leads to our underground dugout. Cleaning, renovating, rebuilding, and making a sandbag table have taken up the day.

*Tuesday, May 23rd.*—Porridge, fried fish and chips, cocoa, and toast for breakfast. Connected Steven's phone to lighthouse. Steak and onions and tin of pears and cream for tea. What's wrong with this for a week?

*Friday, May 26th.*—We have a bullet-riddled Turkish pontoon and a horse to pull it against the current to Ferry Post. Arriving there to-day to buy provisions we sent the horse back to Ridge Post and were about to push off on our drift home when a Tommy lieutenant asked if he could come with us. Sitting in the bow with his back to us he did not observe the rag plugs being removed, but, seeing the water rise in the boat, he cried out: "By Jove, we are sinking, pull for the shore men, pull for the bally shore." When we were within about ten feet of the bank, he jumped and fell flat into the water. He was full of water and thanks as we lugged him out, and as we pushed off again he waved his trousers to us from the bank.

*Sunday, May 28th.*—Scratched my foot in the Canal last Friday. It looks like a rotten tomato and is throbbing like the devil. Think it must be poisoned.

Alf went to sleep on duty last night and Sergeant F.'s going crook a treat—says I'll have to crime him. Told F. to do his own dirty work, I've got enough of my own with this foot.

Relieved by Tommies who are taking over Canal defences. Rejoined battalion and marched to Moascar. Sergeant F. has just told me I'll have to leave the battalion if I report sick with my foot.

*Monday, May 29th.*—Brigade route march this morning. Have had to cut a piece out of my boot, and have been putting hot packs on my trotter for the last hour. Suppose F. has to carry out his instructions, but I reckon that O.C. Stan would give me some light duty for a few days if he were here.

Damned if I'll report sick and leave the old battalion.

*Tuesday, May 30th.*—Another march, and when we get back to camp F. tells us that he will take off his tunic and fight any one of us who wants to have him on. That's only his bluff, he's trying to impress the new chaps in the section. I'll have him on when I'm ready.

*Wednesday, May 31st.*—F. took us for another walk when he could have given us some signal drill instead, and goodness knows we want it, for most of the section know next to nothing about signalling.

*Thursday, June 1st.*—We have had to throw away all our clothing except field-service uniform and one change of underclothing, which is to be packed ready for transport, and we are to go aboard ship in our drill uniforms. I wonder what the folk at home would say if they saw us throwing away all their good work. I have had to part with eighteen pairs of hand-knitted socks that may have served to prevent "cold feet" in France.

Battalion orders—morning parade only and day off. Am writing this in the shade of the water tank near where are supposed to be the graves of the chaps who died on the recent march from Tel-el-Kebir. The only evidence of that march is an inscription on the tank: "Burke and bleeding Wills arrived here 28th March 1916, thanks to the New Zealanders."

Have just heard that Billy Hughes, when passing through the Canal, called out to the thousands of naked Aussies in swimming, "Australia is proud of you boys." "And so they bloody-well ought to be!" came the reply from the troops as though it had been rehearsed.

*Friday, June 2nd.*—The colonel gave us a lecture on discipline with reference to leaving Egypt and arriving in France. It seems that we Aussies have a bad name for not saluting. But, if we are to salute each and every one of the



officers we meet in France, a chap will get the equivalent of housemaid's knee in his elbow. Our easy way of leaning up against a wall or a post when we are resting enables us to conserve our energy for when it is wanted. Can't see how being all the time as stiff as a poker is going to win the war. We came here to fight for freedom, not to be slaves to our superiors—we haven't got any. If I salute an officer I like to feel that we are exchanging man-to-man compliments, and I reckon the officers worth saluting feel the same way. Might be one myself if the war lasts long enough. I'm going to have a look round the camp and see if I can find some fun.

*Saturday, June 3rd.*—Another lecture-parade at which General Birdwood's message was read out. Got into some fun last night at a Gyppo's marquee-restaurant where they were selling rotten food. The boys chucked the niggers out and helped themselves to the supply of eggs, hundreds of which they broke and cooked on top of the fire range and then had a fight with the rest. Afterwards they burnt the joint down. There was an inspection to-day in search of some hundreds of yards of silk that a Gyppo says he has lost.

*Sunday, June 4th.*—Had all our clothing fumigated to-day. Attended church parade.

*Monday, June 5th.*—Route march, and lecture on discipline in France and on how to distinguish officers and the compliments to be paid them. Also an interesting talk on how we are to be billeted with French civilians. A little French home-life will do us good. Sleeping in a bed and eating at a table will do me in between battles even if we do have to help wash up. I'll have to look up a book on French etiquette.

*Tuesday, June 6th.*—Battalion paraded in full marching order, and contents of red kit-bags were inspected before they were sent away by train. Official news of the British naval victory in the North Sea has been received with great cheering. That's the stuff to give 'em. Thank God we've got a navy.

*Wednesday, June 7th.*—A picnic swimming parade to Ferry Post to-day and lunch in Ismailia Gardens. We had

only our water-bottles and haversacks to carry and all enjoyed the day.

*Thursday, June 8th.*—Foot worse than ever.

*Friday, June 9th.*—Battalion sports to-day.

*Saturday, June 10th.*—Brigade sports. I might have represented the battalion at swimming but for my foot. As there's no competition for ludo or snakes-and-ladders, I'm out of it.

*Sunday, June 11th.*—Still on the outer, but manage to attend parades. If there's a route march to-morrow, I'll be marched off to the divisional details camp via hospital.

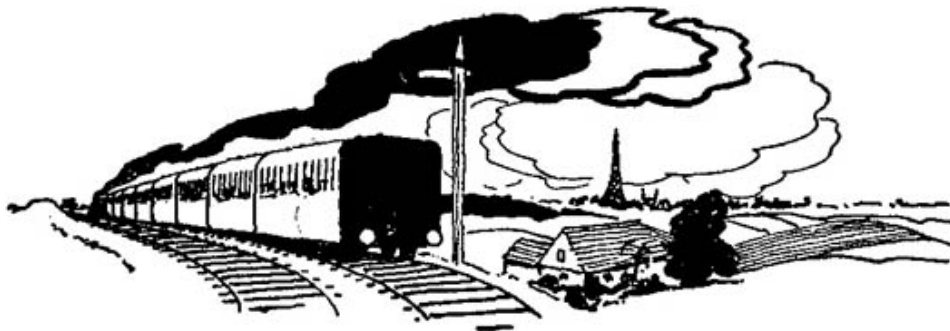
*Monday, June 12th.*—Only another lecture on discipline, entraining, embarking, and routine on board ship. Hope it's better than the *Beltana*, but anywhere would be better than this. We are much shocked at news of the death of Lord Kitchener, yet some, with a queer sense of humour, have as usual prompted the Gyppo paper boys to cry out: "Verra good news, to-morrow's paper, Kitchener dead." In their ignorance the boys do not even know the name of the man, let alone the wonderful work he has done for their country.

*Tuesday, June 13th.*—Memorial service for Lord Kitchener. Massed bands played the "Dead March," bugles the "Last Post." Officers wore black armbands—most impressive.

*Wednesday, June 14th.*—Divisional sports: 15th Brigade won by a few points from our 8th Brigade.

*Thursday, June 15th.*—Have been packing up and cleaning camp to-day, and are now ready to march to the station to entrain for Alexandria. At last, after six months of doing nothing worth while, we are leaving this land of the three S's, and with all reverence I say, "Thank God!"

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## CHAPTER XI. EGYPT TO FRANCE

A soldier's farewell—A pleasant cruise—A trip through France—Guns or thunder?

(16 June—26 June 1916)

*Friday, June 16th 1916.*—Entraining at Moascar about 6.30 last night, sixty men to each long, open truck, we enjoyed five minutes of sing-song before the long train got under way.

We have written letters to our folk in Aussie land,  
Saying we are leaving Gyppo s— and sin and sand;  
We are off to France to fight a much more worthy foe  
Than the Gyppo—from whom we are mighty glad to go.  
It's a long way to fight the Fritzie,  
Where we might stop a shell;  
But before we leave you spielers,  
Here's a soldier's last farewell!  
Good-bye *saida Wallahed!*  
And all your rotten crew;  
It's a long, long way to hang the Kaiser,  
Good-bye and — you!

This is only one of the many songs we sang on the way. At Zagazig Junction the Gyppos met us in full force, and as we were starting off again I bought lemonade. Instead of giving me change of my "cartwheel" (20 piastres, 4s. 2d.), the Gyppo ran down the embankment, so I let him have the full bottle fair on the back of his neck. The boys reckon he's dead. I hope not, but trust it costs him the twenty piastres to mend his neck.

Arived at Alexandria at 3 a.m.—roll call all present and correct. Embarked on H.M.T. *Hororata*, a 9400-ton

vessel of the New Zealand Shipping Company. The 31st Battalion came on board later in the morning, and at 4 p.m. the ship moved out into the stream and anchored.

Have just had our first meal on board (4.45 p.m.). Dinkum butter, fresh bread and jam, and a mug of tea. Have a bunk to sleep on, and everything is nice and clean. This ship has a flush deck from stem to stern. She will crumple up like an egg-shell if a torpedo finds her. However, we are going to have a good trip, and I don't mind if we do have a swim in the Mediterranean.

How different is our departure from Egypt to the send-off at Sydney over eight months ago. No one to wave to, no coloured streamers; just a few dirty Gyppos yelling out for *baksheesh*. Nevertheless we are in the best of spirits, thinking of the future, enjoying the present, and forgetting the past.

*Saturday, June 17th.*—Up at 5 a.m. Had a saltwater shower, a nice clean shave, and a comfortable toilet. Sailed at 7 a.m. with a naval escort, which looks most businesslike. A good breakfast of stew, bread and butter, and tea, and then went on duty on the bridge from 8 a.m. to noon. We have been issued with life-belts and have to wear them day and night.

Shortly after going on bridge duty I received from our escort a message: "Have you any late war news?" The skipper gave me a page of *The Egyptian Mail* to transmit, but the sergeant insisted on himself sending it in semaphore. With all the troops on the deck below gazing at him in amazement, he was waving the red and yellow flags like a windmill gone mad, when the warship sent this slow and deliberate message that all could read: "S-i-g-n-a-l c-o-r-r-e-c-t-l-y." What a cheer went up from the boys.

Every now and then the ship changes course. We are zig-zagging all over the sea as though Gyppo beer has got into our works. The dark blue waters are as calm as a mill-pond and we have lost sight of land.

Have just had dinner—ROAST BEEF—and, as I am for duty from 8 p.m. to midnight on the bridge, I'll have a little shut-eye before tea.

Feeling the throb of the ship and hearing the wind as it whistles through the rigging; drinking in the cool fresh salt air as one peers out over the smooth waters reflecting the light of heaven, with our ship and escort in utter darkness—for there is not a light showing—makes one feel strangely happy, yet all the time expecting something to happen. I have just finished my first night watch of four hours on the bridge, and a delightful supper in the skipper's galley at that gentleman's invitation. His steward was much amused at my affectionate interest in a blue-and-grey enamel tea-pot exactly the same as one at home. Now I'm off to bed.

*Sunday, June 18th.*—Have enjoyed every minute of the day. Good food, plenty of water to wash in, and much sleep.

The naval escort changes every now and then. As one cruiser is relieved by another, it just quietly steams away. No fuss, no cheering, there's no doubt about our navy. It makes us feel even more secure than if we were crossing George Street. Yet, when the alarm goes and we have to rush to our boat positions without knowing if it is dinkum or not, we forget everything but the life-belt which has become the most important part of our equipment.

Except for submarine guards, the troops have little to do. We are all enjoying a good old rest. The peacefulness and soft light upon the waters is like balm to our eyes strained by glistening desert sands. In case we grow soft with the life, we wear our boots for a time each day. I'm glad my foot is on the mend. Usual 8 a.m. to midday watch, and now for the same to-night.

Received a Morse light message from our escort: "Light showing port." Thought our skipper would go mad. Don't believe he's been off duty since leaving Alexandria. It's a big responsibility for the poor old chap. However, the port-hole has now been dosed and someone will get it in the neck, in the morning. Just finished supper, 12.30 a.m.

*Monday, June 19th.*—Curry and rice for breakfast, and other meals good-oh. Alarm at 4 p.m. and a couple of shots fired at a periscope target from our 4.7-inch gun. Usual duties and all's well.

*Tuesday, June 20th.*—It's my seventeenth birthday and a year to-day since I enlisted. What a year, and what a kid I was then! Feel old enough now to be my father's father. In the head, I mean; in the body—well, I'm full of beans. As the skipper sent me to supper at 10 p.m., I told him the news and he gave me a pat on the back and called me "son."

Passed Malta at midday. Shower of rain towards nightfall. Enjoyed the wind and spray on duty to-night.

*Wednesday, June 21st.*—Rifle inspection, gas-helmet instruction, and usual duties. Getting used to having a good time.

*Thursday, June 22nd.*—Handed in our summer drill uniforms and paraded in the good old Aussie uniform and full marching order. It's now about 7 p.m. and we are approaching Marseilles. Our escort is a small French torpedo-boat, which is going round and round us as we steam full speed ahead. The pilot is taking us through a small break in the submarine nets guarding the harbour. Marseilles, at the foot of high surrounding hills and with the Church of Notre-Dame de la Garde perched high upon a peak overlooking the harbour, makes a most pleasant picture. We are drawing into the wharf and the boys are cheering a British warship close by. "What will you do with the Kaiser?" a Jack Tar calls. "Shoot the cow and —!" is the instant response. Much laughter and cheering, and we are alongside. There's to be no shore leave. Only a few troops and Froggie police on the wharf. Oh for a Gyppo or something to throw a spud at!

Later. Looking at the lights of the city we are cursing our rotten luck. Here we are within a stone's throw of civilization, a country whose liberty we will be fighting for within a week, yet we are not allowed to enjoy one night of its freedom. Suppose they are afraid we will push the damned place into the sea. All we want is a walk round the town, a taste of its wine and a look at its mademoiselles. The hawsers look very tempting, and I'll bet someone gives it a go. Blast this war and all its brass-hats, I'm off to bed.

*Friday, June 23rd.*—The time is 7 p.m. (it does not get dark until about 9 o'clock), and we are about to

disembark.

With our band playing the regimental march, we left the wharf about 7.30 p.m. The streets were thronged with people who cheered us on our way, yet some of the women and old men were weeping. Children raced and fought to get near the band. We had to laugh at one youngster who took down his pants but soon regained the twenty paces he had lost. When the "Marseillaise" was played, I thought the Froggies were all going mad. Their national anthem is the most inspiring martial music I have ever heard, but to hear it in such a setting and feel it in one's bones—well, it's the most thrilling experience I have ever had. How easy it would be to fight and die to the accompaniment of such grand music. Though, I have seen little or nothing of Marseilles, the welcome of its lovable people and their expressions of goodwill will ever remain one of my happiest memories.

We entrained in comfortable carriages, ten men to a compartment, and started off about 10 p.m. on our trip of three nights and two days in the train. Looking back as we climbed the mountains, the lights of the city and the harbour and its ships reminded me of home, and I wondered what my folk were thinking and doing at the time. Then, as the train entered a long tunnel, my thoughts went to its opening and the experiences ahead.

*Saturday, June 24th.*—It must have been in the hours of morning when I fell asleep, for I did not wake until in broad daylight we pulled up at Orange for breakfast. The meal, though it included tinned butter, was a secondary consideration to our surroundings. Many people called and waved to us over the railway fence, and, not understanding their lingo other than "*Vive l' Australie!*" we answered them in English and Arabic and exchanged long-distance kisses with the fairer sex.

About an hour and off we went again. The train is an exceptionally long one and some of the chaps are taking walking exercises on the roof. The old French soldiers guarding the railway draw their hands across their throats to warn the roof-walkers of overhead wires. As the train goes slowly on, I have seen a few chaps hop off near the engine and jump on as the last carriage goes past.

Travelling through the Rhône Valley with its beautiful river winding through the richly cultivated countryside, we see only women and old men at work in the fields. They wave and throw kisses to us as we go by, and we cheer and sing and are sometimes quiet as we look out on the living beauty of the landscape. Scarlet poppies and blue cornflowers mingle with the ripe golden crops; green trees, vineyards, and farms extend to the tops of the hills where an occasional castle is seen; tall poplars or spreading mulberry-looking trees line the roadways and countless streams flow everywhere. To think man is fighting and war is raging amidst such heavenly-endowed country; it's damnably wicked and beyond one's understanding. But this country is threatened by a stronger nation. Is not the freedom of these happy people in their delightful country worth fighting for? I think so after all.

We have had a brief stop, and I, like others, have gathered a bunch of flaming red poppies. What kids we are!

At Lyons, one of the largest cities in France, our train stopped on the embankment at the entrance to the station. The people in the street below gave us a most enthusiastic greeting, and then by way of response Les W. played the "Marseillaise" on his cornet. What singing! What cheering! The like I have never heard. Throwing their hats in the air, the Frenchies went wild with excitement and tossed us cigarettes and fruit in abundance. They seem to like our tripey song, "Australia Will be There."

Continuing north, but now with the river to the east, we do not tire of looking out from our confinement on the ever unfolding countryside with its red-roofed farmhouses dotted among the green. Our second meal of the trip was enjoyed at Macon Fhen, where troughs of clear water were provided for our toilet. It was not until the passing of twilight, when darkness cloaked the wondrous views, that we settled down to talk of the fullness of the day. And then the wheels, as they beat rhythmically over the rail joints, counted us off to sleep.

*Sunday, June 25th.*—Another day of scenic beauty, laughter, cheering, and singing. We passed to the west of Paris, seeing only the top of the Eiffel Tower. A passing



hospital train with wounded; a gang of German prisoners, looking happy enough, at work on the railway; the twisted remains of an aeroplane, and some old trenches and wire-entanglements, served to remind us of the war.

At Duvere we had tea. Here, in a long train of wooden trucks each painted *Hommes 40 Chevaux 8* in large letters, we met some French soldiers who treated us well of their wine. Holding the goatskin wine-bag above your bent-back head, you squeeze its thin stream into your gaping mouth. A number of charming girls gathered at the picket fence gave us to understand they were celebrating some national day. They called me "enfant piccaninny," and when the boys passed me over the fence, they gave me more kisses than I might normally have had in the last seven months. Of course there was much laughter as I blushinglly clambered back over the fence, but, if the boys like that form of amusement, they can have some more gladly at my expense.

We have now been on this train for more than forty-eight hours and it has just dawned on me that I have not used, nor heard, one swear word in all that time. That's environment, no doubt. I've never thought of it before, yet, when one comes to think of it, I dare say old Nick would be much the same as us if he were suddenly wafted into Heaven. According to my calculations and with the aid of my compass, I reckon we are approaching the coast near the English Channel. Most of the boys are sleeping so I'll follow suit.

*Monday, June 26th.*—Arrived at Hazebrouck at about 8 o'clock this morning. Detrained at Morbecque and here we are, billeted in a barn with a couple of pigs next door. The host has not yet put in an appearance. I'm told that he's too busy over the way at the farmhouse, which he has converted into a pub. Judging by the number of troops going in there, it must be the correct thing for one to seek out mine host.

I'm waiting for Eric to come back from Battalion Headquarters, also situated at this farm. There's plenty of clean straw in the barn, and I think it will be quite comfortable—yet how different from what we expected! Already we have made the billet shipshape; that's always the first thing we do upon taking up new quarters. Old

Jim S. is fussing about the place like a clucky hen and is speculating on how long it will take the chats, already in evidence, to multiply their population of the barn. Jim's a good old sport—he's just offered to fix me up a possie *if* I want to get off to the village. I'm set, however, for Alf and I have taken up residence on the ten-by-ten-foot hay loft above the door.

This undulating district is an agricultural one, but is not nearly so attractive as the southern country of France. Nor are the folk as interested in us as were their southern countrymen. At least, that is my first impression, and, as the war has been raging hereabout for two years, the peasants cannot be expected to enthuse about us.

Just now we heard a distant rumble. Jim looked at me, I looked at Jim. "Guns," said Jim. "Thunder," said I. But it's guns all right, a shade north of east from here and about twenty miles away. So we are getting near the Big Smoke at last! Well that can wait, but not so Eric, who from across the "field" is loudly calling "*talaheena igri!*" (Arabic for "come quickly"). So here goes for my first night off the chain in France.



## CHAPTER XII. IN BILLETS

Morbecque—its people and parties—a lance-jack adjutant—Estaires—Jesus Farm—*Allemand bombarde!*

(26 June-9 July 1916)

*Tuesday, June 27th 1916.*—Last night—what a night! What a day, and what a fat head! Our host turned out to be a hostess. We call her "Madame" (her old man's at *la guerre*), and Yvonne and Marie, her daughters, help in the *estaminet*. It may have been the fashion two years ago to billet you with the family, and, if so, that's probably why it has changed since. Fancy having your legs under the same table as Yvonne and Marie and Madame, and the old bloke away at the war. And fancy getting into bed with nice white sheets and—well, just waking up to find it's all a dream.

Yes, what a night. The others had about an hour start on us, but we soon picked up Madame, Yvonne, and Marie—their names I mean—and also *bon jour, estaminet, vin blanc, vin rouge, oeuf, pain, bière, très bon*, and a few other words I forget. In fact my memory is not at all clear, and I'm at a loss to know when and how I climbed up the pole to the loft. The kids have also picked up some of our language—"baksheesh souvenir."

Had a chap knowingly been going to his funeral on the morrow, he could not have helped but forget it in the exhilarating atmosphere of that *estaminet*. The homely figure of Madame, her comely daughters, her delightful drinks and food, rushed straight to our heads. Singing all the old songs and the latest "Mademoiselle from Armentières" with as many verses as the Aussie pianist cared to play, we hurried over our drinks so that Yvonne and Marie might be near us the more. Nine o'clock and the picket came all too soon to turn us out into the night air which finished off events so far as I was concerned. I'm told there was a heavy bombardment last night, but can't say I heard it.

We have had an easy day to-day, only early morning parade. The rest of the time I have spent poking around the village. Most interesting, but I'll write of that tomorrow. It's evening now, about 8 p.m. and as light as day. Some stunting aeroplanes have just gone over. I'm told it is the squadron commanded by the "Mad Major."

Later. It's about midnight. There's a war here all right, and a fair-sized one, too, judging by the continuous noise of guns and the reflection out east. The throbbing of my foot awakened me. As I write with the aid of my torch I

can hear the heavy breathing of those below, the rumble in the distance, the gnawing of a rat, the gentle patter of rain, and a few grunts from the pig next door. Somehow I feel irresistibly drawn towards that distant low yet heavy sound, boom-boom-boom, but perhaps that's only because of my inexperience. In any case, 'twould be better if I slept.

*Wednesday, June 28th.*—Very few duties; raining all day.

In the short while that we have been here, I have been able to see quite a lot of the neighbourhood and its people. The village of Morbecque, with its cobblestone street and old barn-like buildings, might have been in pre-war days the setting for that quaint little song "In an Old Fashioned Town." To-day, however, every second shop is an *estaminet*, and the others are mostly bakers', where we buy long loaves of wholesome French bread. One side of the main thoroughfare is taken up with a British motor-transport company, apparently in permanent residence. Troops, mainly of our brigade, are everywhere.

At the top of the street there's a homely little shop where a wrinkled old lady in snow-white cap, embroidered dress, and old-world shawl, sells souvenir postcards worked in silks, and other flimsy gifts. How clumsy and awkward one feels in such presence as one hesitates to touch her dainty wares. Even G., our battalion roughneck, looked different as his big pugilistic mit took delivery of a delicate little "hanky" embroidered "Mother." Troops in twos and threes wander into the *estaminets* from which they later emerge arm in arm, singing and laughing, and on they go. A picket goes past, with the arrested combatants of some drunken brawl, and then, because my cash is at a low ebb, I decide to have a look at the countryside.

Cycling along the poplar or hedge-lined cobble-paved roads, with old stone whitewashed farm buildings and outhouses grouped here and there, one observes the holdings to be very small. The intensely cultivated fields of almost uniform crops are mostly without dividing fences, so that the stranger is unable to determine the boundaries of a farm. Reaching the top of a slight rise and dismounting at the cross-roads, I was much interested in a simple little wayside shrine. To this rustic wooden crucifix—there are many in the district—the peasants

come to worship with the dawn. Though not of the faith, I feel their lowly little shrines to be more appropriate for worship than the palatial churches.

Saluting a pretty milkmaid attired in white cap and coloured shawl, I might also have saluted the sturdy dog drawing, without apparent effort, the small yet heavy-looking cart. My admiration has, however, turned to sympathy for the dogs since I saw one providing the motive power for a butter churn. Pulling a cart or running in a treadmill, his tail has long lost the art of wagging.

The peasants in their rough wooden clogs appear to be simple folk, working long hours and enjoying little of the pleasures we call life. Except those with whom we do business in the shops and *estaminets*, we find this people to be reserved and more or less indifferent to us and the close-by rumblings of war. Yet some of the boys, perhaps more sociable than I, have made friendships by helping at a pump, or by using a sickle have won the favour of a woman harvesting in her field.

Peeping through neatly curtained windows, one glimpses the extreme cleanliness of the homes. Spotless tiled floors, and highly polished metals, simple furnishings and large comfortable-looking beds, snow-white linen and coloured drapings, a few pictures and a little shrine make the peasants' home and happiness. Our entrance to the dwellings is not allowed, and as I cannot *parlez-vous*, I must wait some later opportunity of making myself more familiar with the character and habits of the French.

*Thursday, June 29th.*—The battalion went for a short route march this morning. It was long enough to remind us that our condition has suffered as a result of the trip and change of climate. It has reminded me, too, that I should have been nursing my foot instead of having a good time.

*Friday, June 30th.*—Route march cancelled owing to rain. As orderly corporal I have been kept busy to-day. Australian and English mails received, but none for me. Gas-helmet parade in the afternoon. Saw shells bursting near aeroplanes this evening, but the machines were too far away for us to know to which side they belonged. The billet smells most unpleasant this steaming wet weather.

Everything is damp. Most of the boys are busy "chatting." I'm broke, but Eric's got a few francs, so we are now going to enjoy a little music in the *estaminet*.

*Saturday, July 1st.*—Route march and gas parade.

*Sunday, July 2nd.*—Church parade in the morning. Issued with gas-helmets and goggles in the afternoon. The gas-helmet, a grey cloth bag with a rubber mouthpiece valve and two glass windows, makes you feel like a bogymen when you put it on, but when, after two minutes' wear, the stinking chemical almost chokes you and vapour forms on the windows, you feel like the bogymen's victim. The goggles with sponge rubber protection are for use in tear-gas clouds to stop you from crying for home and mother. What with all the instruction and warnings we have had about gas, I have got the wind up. Of material things such as bullets, bombs, and shells I'm not a bit windy, but gas, well it's just too unearthly and ghostly to me. This gas gear we keep in a waterproof satchel, and woe betide the chap who is found without one.

There's a particularly loud bombardment going on just now. If it continues until dark we'll see a nice firework display out yonder.

*Monday, July 3rd.*—Another game of gas, only this time with the real thing. We have been marched through a gas-cloud with helmets on, and through a tear-cloud without goggles. The tear gas has a fruity smell and stings your eyes like the devil. I suppose this little demonstration is meant to give us confidence, and by the same token I should not be surprised if our artillery are given a few practice shots at us now we have our steel helmets.

The tin hat with its rubber cushioned inner band and strong leather "chin strap" worn at the back of the head makes one feel as safe as an armoured car. It will make a good candle rest and a strong room for your cash if you've got any.

*Tuesday, July 4th.*—We signallers, because we have to remain at our dugout posts, have been issued with special gas box-respirators. The whole is contained in a khaki haversack which is suspended on the chest by a strap going round the neck. It consists of a charcoal air-filter chamber to which is connected a collapsible tube, with a

mask attached at the end. The mask clips on to the nose and covers the mouth, and so leaves free the rest of the face except the goggle-covered eyes. It's an improvement on the gas-helmet and looks much more imposing.

The whole of the 5th Division is now in this area, and I hear that our old O.C. (Stan E.) is now a platoon officer in the 53rd Battalion. He's much too keen a soldier to have remained a glorified office boy on Divisional Headquarters.

*Wednesday, July 5th.*—Another march and the usual routine. A potato crop disappeared overnight and our comforts fund has to foot the bill. Spuds cooked in the coals of a fire are good-oh.

*Thursday, July 6th.*—Paid at 10 a.m. Chucked out of *estaminet* between 10 and 11 p.m.

*Friday, July 7th.*—A convenient storm has just caused us to return from a route march. We are preparing to move towards the front to-morrow. And now to eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow never comes.

*Saturday, July 8th.*—We have arrived at Estaires after a most trying march of over fifteen miles. The full infantry equipment with blankets is a bad enough load, but when in addition you have a field telephone and a box-respirator flogging you at every step, it's the last straw that breaks the signaller's back. The brigade column was longer than the distance between *estaminets*, and, because the heads in their wisdom considered it inadvisable to halt the brigade while any section of it was within coo-ee of an *estaminet*, we had a forced march. As our feet are used to treading on soft sand, each jarring step on the hard rough cobble *pavé* was torture. Most of the 29th Battalion and a number of our mob fell out of the march.

When we finally came to a halt, my morningafter-the-night-before thirst remained unquenched because the madame of a roadside farm refused to lend me the handle of her pump. So, instead, I removed my boots and gave my feet a drink in the stagnant water of the ditch. As my swollen feet would not then fit into my boots, I had to resume the march like a youngster coming home from school on a wet day. After a few miles of marching in this

fashion my feet were bleeding freely, and I was about to give way to that surging feeling in my head and chest that kept saying "fall out" "fall out" when the adjutant, Captain S., offered me a lift on his horse. It was all I could do to muster sufficient strength to pull myself into the saddle, and once there I let the charger have his head. Of course the animal resumed his place alongside the colonel at the head of the battalion. And so, with bare feet and a puttee trailing in the dirt, I shared with our immaculate colonel the honour of leading "our" battalion into Estaires. The boys reckon this was the only joke of the day.

It is not, however, the only joke of the last twenty-four hours they have on me. We gave ourselves a great send-off party from Morbecque last night. The grog must have been extra good, or perhaps I allowed it to have its way. It seems that I have established myself as a comic singer, a clog dancer, an elocutionist, a conjurer, and a clown all in one night. How I found the courage to step into the role of *estaminet* entertainer is beyond me, but once there I received much encouragement. "What do we want?" "More" the boys shouted. "*Encore enfant caporal*" Madame kept calling, while Marie and Yvonne showed their appreciation with shining eyes when their glass- and bottle-laden hands did not permit clapping. It must have been good wine they gave me, at least up to then. Free wine was not my only compensation. I had the privilege of dining alone with Yvonne and was making good progress with my affectionate advances, when Madame called us both back to work so that Marie and the Aussie pianist might have their turn at the supper table. The rest of the evening fell flat. The boys counted me out before I had finished my next number, and Madame and the girls seemed to lose interest in me when I failed to draw custom to their house. A bottle of champagne failed to have the desired effect. The noise of laughter and singing became just a dull roar in my ears and my vision became more and more hazy until consciousness completely left me as I was being carried back to our barn.

It was most considerate of the boys to carry me home, but they made the mistake of putting me to bed in the wrong "room," where in the early hours of the morning I awakened to find my bed companion grunting and kicking her objections—they had put me to bed with the pig.



Have just bathed and dressed my feet, and have cut my gas mask satchel into a waterproof bandage to keep the dirt out of the Gyppo cut which has opened up again. We are billeted in the school, and from here, where I am going to stay until it's time to march again to-morrow, I can see children playing games. They have a gas mask each, the satchel pinned to their clothes. Poor little devils, it's a damned shame they should have to live so near the front line, which is only five miles away.

We have received orders that there's to be no falling out on the march to-morrow. We are to remember that we are marching into action—as though we thought it a picnic we are going to. I'll be glad to get there and settle down to a little fighting, instead of marching, for my country. Some of the boys reckon I should go sick with my foot, but I'm saving it up until after the first stunt, when it might be a good excuse for a little rest. Lying back here on my pack, with feet resting on a stool, I'm feeling much better, but think I'll give the *estaminets* a miss for to-night. Had enough *estaminet* last night to do me for a while, but I wouldn't mind being in Madame's parlour again just now. I wonder what Yvonne and Marie will do with that box full of "rising suns?" I'm sure they appreciated best my gift tins of bully-beef. What kisses, and even from Madame, and then, fancy sleeping with the pig!

*Sunday, July 9th.*—As we marched out of Estaires this morning Brigadier-General Tivey took the salute at the corner where we turned east, and after a seven-mile march we arrived at Jesus Farm. The farm consists of a number of small huts on the bank of a canal, and as it is only three miles from the front we have to keep in the huts as much as possible. Looking out over the battle-scarred landscape, we see the bursting shells, the pock-marked ground, the screen camouflaged roads, battered and shell-holed buildings, splintered trees, and old trenches and entanglements. Yet some peasants are working in their fields, and it seems incredible that we are within easy range of Fritz's shells. As I have been detailed to go into the front line to-morrow with an advance party consisting of an officer and several N.C.Os, Jack F., who has been treating me better of late, allowed me to go for a ride in a limber to Armentières. It was a run of only two miles, yet not without incident. We helped ourselves to a jar of rum from an Army Service wagon that had stopped a shell, and

then, arriving at the much battered town, we were just in time for a little shooting match, entering an *estaminet* as Madame, with babe under her arm, fled calling out "*Allemand bombarde!*" We followed her a little later, and as we rushed for a cellar a youngster of some ten or twelve years plainly chided our fright. He quickly followed us, however, when a shell, with ear-splitting crash, tore a huge hole in a foot thick wall near by.

I was glad to get back to Jesus Farm. In the fading light both sides must be enjoying an evening nap, for, except for the noise of a few bursting antiaircraft shells and our planes coming home, all is quiet and peaceful. That little drop of rum has given me a warm and pleasant glow, and now to clean my rifle.



### CHAPTER XIII. BOIS-GRENIER—FLEURBAIX

Into the line—A "sweet" possie—The first casualty—Wind up—Relief—A school billet—An evening walk—A nip of rum—Preparing for battle—Taking stock—Instructions for hop-over—A letter home—A year in the army—A man's confidence—The diary ends.

(10 July-19 July 1916)

*Monday, July 10th 1916.*—It is now 4.30 p.m. and I have everything in readiness to leave here at 1700 (5 p.m.) for the front line at Bois-Grenier. As the only signaller of the party (a company commander and six others), it is my job to make myself familiar with the lines of communication

before the battalion takes over to-morrow night. I will then be in charge of a section of signallers. After the months of training we find ourselves to be without company signallers, so H.Q. signallers have to supply all requirements. It was decent of Jack to ask me if I would take on the job instead of ordering me to do so. It will be an experience. I wonder what it will be like? Looks all, right from here.

Connected a phone here to-day, have had a sleep and have again cleaned my 120 rounds and rifle. The rifle is as bright and shiny as the eyes of Yvonne. I wonder if I'll put it to proper use? All hands are busy with equipment. There is an air of suppressed excitement and all are in the best of spirits. I've an idea the boys envy me going in to-night, though one has just asked if I am writing my will and another is concerned about the fate of my pants. (I'm reminded of packing up to go camping for Eight Hour week-end in 1913, and, as then, I'm wondering if I've got everything. We went to Narrabeen, Bob bought a pipe, burnt the back out of his coat, set fire to our hired tent, and it rained all night. Going camping for pleasure is like joining the army for pastime, it's nice to look forward to and good to look back on.) Now it's time to go and have a look at the Great War—'twill be a change to have something to write home about.

*Tuesday, July 11th.*—1800 or 6 p.m., c/o Aunt Sally, Bois-Grenier (place C. 17, to be correct). But first to go over the last twenty-five hours since leaving Jesus Farm.

Leaning against a wall, we are awaiting the major. A few cobbers are giving cheerful advice: "What kind of flowers do you want on your grave, Aussie?" "We'll write and tell 'em what you did in the Great War, Daddy." Yet, there's a "something" dinkum one feels in the air of this soldier's farewell. Here comes the major, he's been enjoying a little party. "Fall in and follow me, gentle flock," he says, and, laughing, we understand.

Walking in single file behind the major, he keeps us well entertained, and shouts us a drink at the last *estaminet*. We soon leave the cultivated fields behind. We are now in the shell-ploughed area, ruined houses and—bang! What was that? Only the bark of an 18-pounder from its cover a few yards away on our left. It silences us for a while. The

sharp explosions of occasional whizz-bangs become plainer, a large shell gives off much black smoke as it goes "crump" on our right, and a few of ours whistle overhead. We come to some crossroads, lie back on our packs for a spell, and when the major's cane ceases its devil's tattoo on a cobblestone it is again time to get on our way.

We are now treading along a duckboard track, but the major has lost the way, and we find ourselves in the rear support line of the 13th Battalion. While the major is receiving directions, I inquire of a sergeant: "Do you know Arthur W. in this battalion?" "No," he says, "ask that chap over there, he has just come from the front line." It is not necessary to ask, however, for it is Arthur himself. How different he looks, yet little wonder, for he has just been sent out with shell-shock from a dugout where five were killed. What a wreck he looks! He hardly knows me. "Well, so long; keep your legs together, Arthur," is my farewell to him, and I'm glad to be again on the duckboard track.

The sides of the narrow winding sap are sufficiently high to give us cover. A few bullets sing gently over our heads and the burst of a shell sounds not far away. We have not long passed a support trench when we come to a halt. The word is passed back, "Keep low and run across" The sap has been blown in. It comes my turn to run. I try to pull my tin hat down over my ears, and make a crouching rush across the open space. The smell of sulphur fumes indicates that the damaging shell has not long since burst. It occurs to me that we might have been in time to meet the shell if the major had not lost the way. That short run, or perhaps the necessity for it, has quickened my pulse and breathing, and I am uncomfortably out of breath when we come to some sand-bag works to left and right.

This is the front line. Here we see three chaps "chatting." One remarks: "Here come the Marmalades." Another calls: "Look out, Fritz! Here's Tivey's Chocs! Spare me blooming days" We grin and try and think of a commonplace reply to these veterans of Jacka's Mob. One of our number finds voice to say: "Hello! Where's this war we've heard about?"

"We've just knocked off for afternoon tea, sorry you're late," replies one of the "chatters," and they all laugh at our antics as a whizz-bang whistles over our heads.

Going to the left we see a notice, "Watson's Bay," which causes our smiles to look and feel more natural. After we cover about 300 yards of the front, two officers greet our major and we know that we have reached the company headquarters of the post. While awaiting instructions we lie back on our packs and watch the shells bursting round an aeroplane. We are debating whether it is one of ours or one of theirs. Whiz-z-z! Instinct tells us that something solid is approaching from the sky. Smack! We all scramble. I rush into the nearest dugout and am greeted with "What the Hell's the hurry, Grandpa?" by a signaller who looks at me as though it was I who had just arrived from the clouds.

"What! Didn't you hear that chunk of shell?" I gasp.

"Christ! That's nothing. You'll soon get used to that," he answers reassuringly. "If you're taking over C. 17 you've come to the right place. Better drop your pack and put your rifle over there."

He thinks I have "dropped my bundle." I make an effort to hide my fear. I carelessly throw my tin hat into a corner, ask the signaller what part of Aussie he comes from, and try to keep a steady hand as I offer him a cigarette.

"Hey! Look what's here" he shouts, to wake the corporal on the sand-bag bunk.

The corporal gives a grunt, stretches and rubs his eyes. "What! The War Babies Brigade! Thank God we've got a navy."

And then, deciding that it is time to assert myself,

I invite the corporal to kiss the baby's —.

"Good for you," says the signaller, as he makes a bayonet swipe at a rat running near his phone. "That's the stuff to give 'im. Here! take a seat and make yourself at home."

"Seems a nice quiet place," I venture.

"Not bad," says the corporal, "till you stir up Fritz's hate."

With some display of indifference I manage to make a few inquiries and learn that except for mending busted cables

and doing telephone duty—four hours on and eight off—the signaller's job in this possie is "sweet." The dugout is almost shrapnel-proof: only a direct hit or a shell-burst near the opening can do any harm. They have not had many casualties. The tucker is pretty good, there is a cook-house in the line. My own observations tell me that rats and chats are numerous, and the smell of the place is anything but sweet.

While the corporal winds his puttees, the signaller gives me instructions how to plug the telephone to H.Q., C. 10, and artillery on their home-made switchboard. He is having a telephone conversation with some signaller of another post on the subject of Tivey's "Chocolates" having arrived at the war, when the corporal calls from outside: "Come on, young'un, I'll take you round the show!"

About ten paces from the dugout we come to a parapet, and asking, "What's over there?" I step up for a look. I am roughly pulled down and fall in a heap at the corporal's feet.

"You silly young blighter," he says, "do you want to stop some lead? Fritz! That's what's over there. Here! here's a periscope; have a look at No Man's Land." Then to prove his words and illustrate his meaning, he puts my hat on a stake and holds it over the top. Zip! the first bullet hits the parapet. Ping-g-g! the second ricochets off the target, and my respect for Fritz and tin hats is enhanced.

We visit Pyman's Corner and this inspires the corporal to call me Simon. "Come on, Simon," he calls when I am trying to add a nosecap to the collection of metal that already fills my pockets, "you'll want a G.S. wagon to carry your souvenirs if you keep that up." We trace the phone cable along Sniper's Alley and I learn that the zip-zip-zip-zip! on the sand-bags is the shooting of "Parapet Joe." "He's a dabster with the machine-gun," the corporal observes, and I feel that Joe can see us as we go along the sap.

It is almost dark. I keep close behind the corporal as he leads the way back. I have almost convinced myself that I am accustomed to the new surroundings, and am thinking how proud my people would feel if they could see me now

when—flash! bang! right near my ear, and I fall flop on the duckboard.

"Ha! ha! ha" I hear, and, looking up, see a chap preparing to fire another flare. "Ha! ha! That's the idea, sonny, you know how to duck. Ha! ha!"

I regain my feet, but fail to appreciate the joke, and decide that the vital question is to know when, rather than how, one should duck.

But for the moving illumination of flares, it is dark when we arrive back at C. 17. The corporal tells his signaller that I am getting on fine, and he advises an artillery officer sitting on the bunk that I have expressed a wish to go out spotting. That's news to me, but, remembering my resolution not to show any fear, I decide to give it a go, though I know nothing of the job. I am rather reluctant to leave my tin hat, but accept their advice and pull a Balaclava cap over my head.

"No! You won't want your rifle," says the corporal. "Take a bayonet for an earth pin. Here's your phone. Be careful where you lay the line."

"Prussian Guards over there," remarks the signaller, with a grin; "you might collect a souvenir bonnet." He picks up a drum of cable, takes hold of his end and, giving me the drum, says: "Here you are, don't forget to bring it back."

They might have wished a man good luck, I think as I pay out the cable and endeavour to keep close on the heels of the officer. He comes to a halt, says something to a sentry, and tells me to come on. We crawl through a little opening called a sally-port and, realizing that I am now in No Man's Land, I follow him and, as far as possible, imitate his every action. I hold my breath and do not so much as move an eyelid when a flare lights up our surroundings. We come to our wire-entanglement, go to the left, and pass through an opening in the maze of wires. Going out half-right along a depression in the ground, I am anxiously trying to calculate the length of cable left on the drum when the glare of a flare temporarily blinding my vision, I stumble and fall into a water-filled shell-hole.

The cold water adds to my shivering condition, and my fingers tremble as I connect the phone when we establish

ourselves in a shell-hole observation-post. The boss gives me the impression that he has been doing this kind of work all his life. Although he inspires some confidence, I stand at the alert with one eye cocked in the direction of Fritz and my kicking-off foot pointing towards home. The business of our mission seems quite simple. The boss scans the landscape ahead through his glasses, observes what he believes to be Germans mending their trench, and sends a range message to his battery. A shell or two comes whizzing over and I can almost swear that I see bits of Fritzes in the flash of the explosion. It is some time before I am able to convince myself that the moving shadows caused by the flares are not a host of Germans. Our little game goes on into the night...

To the left I see a solid-looking figure moving, but am afraid to point it out to the boss in case he thinks I've got the wind up. Then I see two more in the same direction—they seem to be coming towards us. The boss sees them, too, and we crouch down so as just to peep over the edge of our crater. I wish I had my rifle as I see a Fritz in silhouette against the light of a falling flare. But nothing happens. They disappear in the darkness that follows.

I am just beginning to kid myself that I like this game of pilgrims of the night when the time comes to go home. As we make our way back, an occasional burst of machine-gun fire breaks out and a few flares go up. In my endeavour to keep up with the boss I have trouble in rewinding the wire on to the drum, and I am sweating freely by the time we reach the sally-port.

"Thank you, corporal," says my companion of the night, as he presents me with a tin of fags. "Good night!"

The signallers are playing cards when I arrive at the dugout.

"Well, how'd you like it, Simon?" asks the corporal.

"Oh! not bad—pretty tame," I answer.

"Simon! 'Struth! Ned Kelly, don't you mean?" remarks a signaller who is a stranger to me.

"Ananias, more like it," chips in the signaller of my acquaintance, and then proceeds to help himself and treat



his cobbles to the gift tin of Gold Flake cigarettes I have placed on the table.

I am not slow to accept the corporal's offer of his bunk for a spell, nor is it long before I fall off to sleep.

Yes, that about covers yesterday, or rather the last seven hours of it. Strange to say, I slept well. In fact I had to be awakened at "stand to." Have been busy all day inspecting and mending phone lines. According to the 14th Battalion chaps, this afternoon's strafe from Fritz was unusually heavy. It consisted mostly of whizz-bangs which landed back in the support line, though a dud shell, from which I am going to get the copper driving band, dislodged a number of sand-bags near this dugout. Waiting for it to burst seemed like ages, but it could only have been a few moments before someone shouted "Dud" The corporal and I stopped a fair issue of mud from a shell-burst as we were mending a broken cable. The mud sticks like a poor relation.

When our battalion takes over to-night it will have to hold a front of about 1000 yards. As that represents only about a one-thousandth part of the Western Front, it is difficult to form an opinion as to how the war is progressing. Judging by the state of the trenches here, with grass and crops growing about the place, I should say there's been very little change for some time. As the land is very marshy, breastworks of sand-bags, supported by wooden stays, wire-netting, and brushwood, have been built. There are good dugouts or sand-bag cubby-houses in which to shelter, and well laid duckboards connect up the whole system. Of course the place is lousy with "livestock," and there are millions of rats. The space between front line and supports is, like No Man's Land, just a mass of shell-holes mostly filled with stinking stagnant water. Pulling a cable out of one of them we disturbed some of its secrets—no wonder the rising vapour is so heavily laden. We labelled this particular hole "4711."

It seems queer to see birds hopping and chirping in this otherwise wholly unnatural place. Even the sky with anti-aircraft shells by day, and flares and rockets by night, is changed.

I wanted something different to write about, and for the last four hours that's what I have been trying to do in between receiving and sending messages. Expect my signallers to arrive any time now. I'll be sorry, for more than one reason, to lose the company of these 14th chaps, fine lot of fellows that they are.

The machine-guns are very busy to-night. I wonder if Fritz knows of the relief. I'm told there are lots of spies behind our lines—they are supposed to signal to the Germans by using different kinds of farm implements in various ways by day and with window blinds by night. It does seem strange that peasants should work their farms within range of Fritz's guns.

*Wednesday, July 12th.*—Took over from 14th Battalion signallers at 0100 (1 a.m.) with two signallers and four orderlies. Four hours on and eight off. I'm taking the 8 to 12 shifts day and night, officially that is, but it seems to me that I'll have to be on hand most of the time. There's only room for two comfortably in this dugout. Alf's doing his turn with the ear-phones at the little sand-bag table, and I'm lying back on the bunk. A shaded slush-lamp and candle give a very poor light. Alf's got the shrapnel-proof door shut and the "joint" is full of smoke. Now to ease the laces of my boots, adjust the box-respirator in case I want it in a hurry, and—"I say, Alf, don't forget to wake me if there's an alarm."

On 8 a.m. to noon watch. Communication regular and, except for a few shells lobbing in supports, it is very quiet. I'm told G. and a few others are playing two-up outside. One of the orderlies, with bayonet fixed to rifle and a piece of cheese on the tip of the blade, has just blown a rat's head off. Don't think the battalion has had a casualty yet. There's no mistake, it's quiet. Suppose a raid or some other diversion will be arranged to break the monotony. We'll soon get fed up of this Micawber stunt. It's a cushy joint. Why, we are getting stew for dinner to-day!

Night shift, 11 p.m. Thought something would happen. It has. A chap put his head up this afternoon and was killed outright. An officer on our right is supposed to have said, "Come on, boys, let 'em know we're here;" but for everything we threw at Fritz we got ten times as much in return. Dodging their aerial torpedoes is, I believe, very

exercising, and so is mending the phone lines when they have done their damage. We did little else all the afternoon other than look for and mend breaks. While pulling out a piece of broken cable, Dab came along with a box of bombs. "You've got a good job pulling strings," he said. "How about—" But that's as far as he got, for we all beat it towards, instead of away from, a shell that burst about twenty yards off. There's no mistake, we are all windy. There was a gas alert to-night, so I don't feel a bit like going to sleep until the wind changes. Alf's asleep and I'm alone. Looking out of the door I imagine troops to be passing by, but it's only the moving shadows caused by the rising and falling flares. Fritz's flares are better than ours, and he uses more of them. I'm beginning to like the music of the machine-guns; they relieve the suspense. And so do the rats. I just had a crack at one, and Alf woke up with a start. I'll have to watch Alf, as he keeps a cartridge always ready in the breech.

*Thursday, July 13th.*—This is the most unpleasant job I've ever had. It's about 2.30 a.m. I don't know what awakened me, but I got a shock to see — on duty crying like a kid. Poor —, he can't help it. It's the awful stillness before dawn. Only a few odd and distant cracks are to be heard. This hole is dank and clammy. The slush-lamp's gone out and the candle is giving a few last splutters. I'll light another and see if I can't cheer him up with a game of noughts and crosses. A drop of rum would help to chase away the dingbats. Yes, I've got 'em too, but somehow they don't show. Suppose a bloke would get court-martialled if he played a mouth-organ and woke the major opposite. Anyhow I can't play and I haven't got one, so that's that. Writing this stuff is like talking to myself—think I'll chuck it.

Could have counted Fritz's shells to-day, there have been so few. The major got a shock though. He was at his dugout door watching us clearing away a lot of old cables, when a shell whistled over, to burst some thirty yards distant, and he swears he saw it not more than three feet above our heads. It's a fact, too, that if you look ahead of the direction from which you hear a heavy shell, you can see it travelling through the air.

Alf and I amused ourselves by shooting about 50 rounds through a hole in the breastwork this afternoon. Don't

expect we hit anything other than Fritz's trench, and even that was hard enough to discern. Not a sign of a living object did we see to have a pot at. An enemy sniper, however, saw us, when later we were looking for souvenirs between the front and second lines. As I was filling my water-bottle at a little creek, a bullet went clean through Alf's on the bank, and when we stood up a couple whistled past. We are not supposed to go out there in daylight, nor did we stay long after that.

Slightly to the rear, farther along the line, are the remains of an old convent wall. How far it is screened by our breastwork can be seen by the line of bullet marks. A machine-gun plays on the wall just a few feet from the water-pump, but, like most other bullets, shells and bombs, aimed at this spot, its ammunition is wasted.

It's just on midnight. I'll make up my register now and then for some shut-eye.

*Friday, July 14th.*—Jack F. came to see us this morning. It rained shells just as he got here, so he stayed for an hour until things settled down. A good deal of Flanders settled on and round about our dugout during the bombardment. We had the door shut and, when a burst of shrapnel hit it, Jack said: "Open the door and pay the rent; that's the landlord." Out of that lot we suffered a few casualties. I saw two being taken past on stretchers. We put a new line to D.57, or at least half-way to it, for the signallers there have to earn their tucker too. Looks as though we'll have to run a new line to C.10 if the existing one is not soon mended. I hope not, for I'm dead tired to-night and have to leave here in the morning.

*Saturday, July 15th.*—New Zealand Rifle Brigade has just relieved us. It's early morning, and the rest of the battalion is being relieved later. There's no doubt about these N.Z. chaps, they treat us well everywhere. I offered to run a new line to C.10 before leaving, but their corporal won't hear of it. Instead, he has sent two of his men to do the job, and I have just finished some bought tucker that he brought in. Chaps of other units have been remarking on my age. This corporal reckons I don't look more than sixteen.

Later, at Battalion Headquarters.—Tom and I are in charge of the advance party going out to Fleurbaix, about three miles away, where we are to take up billets in the school. Coming out from the front line, we put all our gear on a truck and I was one of two pulling in front and going Hell-for-leather along Tramway Avenue, when—bang! The report was caused by a piece of wire catching in the trigger of Alf's rifle on the truck. The bullet chipped a piece off the heel of my boot and everyone laughed at the names I called Alf. There'll be some fun in the old town of Fleurbaix to-night, if there's an *estaminet* and I can raise the wind.

*Sunday, July 16th.*—To complete my notes of yesterday. Arriving at Fleurbaix village, little more than a mile behind the front line, we posted two sentries on our dump and forthwith entered the school. Satisfaction with the billet was being generally expressed when Fritz let us have some hate. The first shell knocked tiles flying from the roof. The mob scattered lively and the sentries followed them. Tom and I exchanged looks of mutual agreement, and left the place with the excuse to our consciences that it was our responsibility to find the boys and keep them together. Some more of the roof came tumbling down, and when a 5.9 went "crump" behind us we broke from our semi-dignified walk into a wild run.

When free of the hamlet and having regained breath, we set out to look for the boys. One was asleep in a hay-stack, a number were in an old trench, and a few were taking cover under an old cart. With much bravado we asked them why the Hell they left? They looked very sheepish as they started to wander back. Stan H. changed from deathly white to flaming red at my gibe—"You've got the wind up." It hurts to be told that you are lacking in pluck and guts. God knows, I could do with some myself.

Crossing the main street and walking down the path that leads to the school, Tom and I stopped to inspect a fresh shell-hole. A passing Tommy informed us that two engineers were killed by this shell less than half an hour ago. We stood there discussing the matter, when the screech of an approaching shell sent Tom running for the cover of the corner building and I dropped flat on the ground. I have been told that a shell never lobs in a recent shell-hole. But this one did, with a terrific blinding crash.

My head felt that it no longer belonged to me. At first I could not move, being paralysed with fright, but another close shell brought me back to active life, and I hurriedly joined Tom at the corner. He was glad to see me, saying he had felt certain that I was blown to bits.

As we stood there we saw many runners and found strength of voice to give Wal, our champion runner, a great cheer as he went past breaking even time. "Why go to the Olympic Games?" said Tom, "there's more speed here than I ever saw in the Goldarn States..."

Towards evening the shelling quietened and we went for a look round the village. An endless stream of army traffic kept passing along the main street. Guns of all descriptions, limbers of rations, wire, duckboards, sandbags, bombs, and shells, rattled and bumped and rumbled over the rough cobbled road. The place is badly shattered, yet civilians live within its tumbling walls, shell-scarred halls and everlasting din.

A gas-alarm sounded. An aged madame came rushing out of her dilapidated house and raved at us as though we were to blame, It was a false alarm, however—due to a mist rising from the ground. Tom went over to reassure the old lady, but she slammed the door in his face. "Christ! is there no fellow feeling in this damned place?" I was surprised to hear myself say. Tom then remarked: "Come on, I've had enough of this joint, let's find the mob."

We found them—camped against a wall—trying to take cover from the drizzling rain.

"What a bloody fine billet" someone growled. "Well, go and try your luck in the school and leave us your waterproof," Tom suggested.

"Come, this is no good," Eric called to me, and I followed him when he said he knew of a good pos-sie for two. Turning the first corner he introduced me to the secret of his water-bottle (S.R.D.—rum) and then produced a bottle of wine. Nelson's blood and plonk make a good tonic, best taken when standing in the rain before retiring to sleep in the mud. When we returned to the garden wall, the complaints about our singing did not worry us in the least,

nor did the many questions as to the locality of our cellar keep us awake for very long.

That was yesterday. To-day, things have been moving quickly. We have received orders for a hop-over to-morrow. The whole of our 5th Division is taking part in the stunt, also a British division on our right. The 4th Australian Divisional Artillery has been added to ours, and we hear that a number of 6-inch and 9.2-inch howitzers and a 12-inch railway gun also are in readiness to lend a hand. It's to be a big affair—I think Lille is the objective. Huge quantities of ammunition and other material are being taken into the line. Our guns are busy preparing the way and others are hurriedly taking up position. But Fritz must know there's something doing. There's much activity to be seen and aeroplanes are more numerous than usual. So we are to have the honour of being the first Australian troops to engage in a dinkum battle in France.

We have been moved nearer the line. Our billet is an old deserted farmhouse, which seems safer than Fleurbaix. We hear Fritz attacked the 58th Battalion last night after strafing their part of the line with heavy artillery and trench-mortar fire. They are said to have suffered about 150 casualties. We'll square that account with Fritz to-morrow.

I'll be glad to get on the move. This waiting and keeping under cover while a continuous bombardment is going on all round is very trying. I have not yet received details of my duties for to-morrow other than that I have to take a phone line over in the charge. Most of the boys are sitting round this once-upon-a-time kitchen, writing letters. A few are having a game of cards, and one is looking with strange expression towards the line of bursting shells. Though we try not to show our feelings, one cannot help but notice the unnatural atmosphere. There's a queer hollowness in our laughter, our jokes are a little forced, yet there's an air of confident determination withal. How different things would be if this place were an *estaminet*. 'Twould be Madame and her music and the mademoiselles rather than her wine that would cheer us up. What's the good of writing, I'll give it a go myself; "Come on boys, a little music." "Mademoiselle from Armentières, *parlez-vous!*"—"We Are a Rag-time

Army"—"Old Soldiers Never Die—They Simply Fade Away."

*Monday, July 17th.*—The stunt has been postponed, or rather the hop-over has, but the artillery of both sides is boxing-on a treat. There's been a heavy fog; the sun is shining now; aeroplanes are receiving much attention from Fritz, and our front line, supports, and communication trenches are being well and truly shelled.

I am sitting on some boxes of rifle ammunition at the side of the road near the entrance to Cellar Farm Avenue. There are stacks and stacks of ammunition all camouflaged with grass. This morning I was sent down here with a section of signallers to help carry 60-pound plum-pudding bombs into the line for the heavy trench-mortars. Instead, I have been having a look round. The signallers are sheltering in the farmhouse opposite which is being prepared for a dressing station, and is already busy handling cases. In the graveyard alongside the farmhouse a huge grave has just been dug for some fifty of our chaps. They are wrapped in blankets, some of them of little more bulk than a half-filled sandbag. Just apart from our boys lies a dead German whose tunic is now bereft of button and badge. Two chaplains are burying our dead; there's no "Last Post"; just the continuous roar of guns. They have finished and are now deciding who will bury the Fritz. In the end he's just buried, that's all, no service going with the dirt that covers him. It seems wrong to me; he was human; he is dead; he has loved ones who know not yet that he's gone—and how—just chucked into a hole.

The noise of battle continues. One's thoughts have changed. The glamour of war has gone; we see it as it is, a struggle for life amidst death. I remember the cause for which we are fighting. I'll do my bit, not with the idea of any dazzling glory, but with a realization of the tragedy of it. Maybe I'm different from others. I like to be alone and think, just as in those old days when I' went cycling alone and made my bed on the sweet-smelling earth 'neath the gum-trees—but what a different bed now.

Have just seen two of my cobbers taken past. Lofty B. our champion high jumper, who played the trombone in the band, has a chunk of shell in his knee. And Rex, one of our old signallers, who went to the 8th Machine-Gun



Company, is wounded in the right arm. A good fellow, Rex, one of the whitest. "See you in Blighty, Rex! Cheerio" I called, and he waved his other hand. Ron C. is taking him to the dressing station.

While I am writing, Fritz is shelling up the communication trench. He's getting a bit too near for me, so I'll join the boys over the way and share in a tin of bully-beef, which might fill the aching void. Then for a bit of toil.

*Tuesday, July 18th.*—I've been for a walk to the front line, and a run all the way back. Curiosity, they say, killed the monkey, and it damned near did that for me. Going up Cellar Farm Avenue, I returned via Mine Avenue, after seeing about 500 yards of the front from which we are going to hop over to-morrow. Saw young Tozer, a signaller of the 31st Battalion, up there. I think he's even younger than myself. His cobbles went crook because I did not take them some rum, and would not believe that we have not had any. The trenches are receiving much attention from Fritz's whizz-bangs, "minnies," and 5.9s, and the troops are kept busy rebuilding. They are all anxiously waiting for the hop-over, which I believe has been fixed for six to-morrow night. While getting direction from a sergeant, a 5.9 burst near by and the concussion knocked us both over. I bled from the mouth, nose, and left ear, but did not receive a scratch, and jumping to my feet to run I noticed that the sergeant did not move. He was dead, concussion apparently, for I could not see a mark. That's why I've returned here so quickly.

Later. Have just received my instructions for to-morrow. I'm to take four signallers over to Fritz's trenches, where we are to establish a telephone station after the charge. We'll be attached to C Company, which is to carry over supplies. Jack tells me that my other stripe will be gazetted to-morrow. Eric W. is going over with A Company, and Jim S. is in charge of another job. When Jack asked me if I mind having the job I lied "No," but, now I come to think of it, a man might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb.

Again I feel an *estaminet* should be the place to spend this night, but there's none that we can go to so I'll write a letter home and then for a little sing-song.

*MY DEAR MOTHER AND FATHER,*

*Since last writing we have been in action, and so far I have managed to keep away from Fritz's shells, etc. Saw Ron taking his cobber Rex to the dressing-station yesterday with a wound in the arm. Have received mail by Osterley, and one later, for which many thanks. I am in the best of health and looking forward to a good slap at Fritz. We will have him on the move within a day or two, and no doubt you will read about it in the papers. Must close now to catch the mail. Best love to all at home.*

*Your affectionate son,  
TED.*

*P.S.—Don't worry, as I am O.K. and having a good time. Remember me to Roy and all. I'll write them later.*

*Wednesday, July 19th.*—It's twelve months today since we went into camp at Liverpool. A year in the army and still going strong.

We have just dumped our packs in the Q.M.'s store, and been issued with 48 hours' dry rations and a little phial of iodine. Have had a good hot feed and we are now waiting to move off.

The shelling has considerably increased, especially since 11 a.m., the artillery "zero" hour. The lines visible from here are just a mass of bursting shells and the air is filled with the dust and smoke of battle.

Had a vivid dream last night. Dreamt that I got it in the arm, so I've made a tourniquet in case. I'm feeling good—oh—a ball of muscle, as Tom would say. We are all warmed up and ready, though not from the effects of rum. That's to be given us after the fight—it will go farther.

One of my signallers asked to be paraded before the doctor, though he does not know what's wrong with himself. I told him the doctor will soon tell him. Stan H. has offered to take his place and Jack has agreed. Stan told Jack he would go anywhere with me. How wonderful it is to feel that a man has such confidence in you, it helps

more than anything else to keep the wind down. It helps too, to hum a tune to yourself. An old one's best. Mine's "Yippi-addy, i-ay," though sometimes I miss a beat or two.

To be continued—later.



## CHAPTER XIV. FROMELLES

Over the top—One of the 5533 casualties.

(19th July 1916)

["Suggested first by Haking as a feint-attack; then by Plumer as part of a victorious advance; rejected by Monro in favour of attack elsewhere; put forward again by G.H.Q. as a 'purely artillery' demonstration; ordered as a demonstration but with an infantry operation added, according to Haking's plan and through his emphatic advocacy; almost cancelled—through weather and the doubts of G.H.Q.—and finally reinstated by Haig, apparently as an urgent demonstration—such were the changes of form through which the plans of this ill-fated operation had successively passed. It was now definitely ordered."—*Australian Official History, Vol. III, p.350.*]

Here Ted's diary ends—a story just begun. Snapping an elastic band over the pages, he stows and buttons the note-book into a tunic pocket, and now, just past noon, puts on his equipment. He pulls the belt a little tighter, slings rifle and telephone over his shoulder, and as he lights a fag Sergeant Jack calls: "Ted! all ready?" "All set," is the answer, and away they go.

Down the shell-scarred *pavé* road Ted leads his four signallers to the lilt of "Yip-i-addy i-ay i-ay, Yip-i-addy i-

ay." Paa-aa-ang, paa-ang, whooo, paa-aa-ang! go shells of every calibre, screeching and roaring over their heads. "—I don't care what becomes of me."...Boom, boo-oom, crash, bang, booooo! comes the noise in front. Bang-bang-bang! from an 18-pounder battery on the left. "That's the stuff to give 'em!" shouts somebody. "Yip-i-addy i-ay i—" Crrang crash! goes a 5.9 just ahead.

Already, walking wounded are passing back. "What's it like up there?" they are asked. "Cushy—just got a Blighty," one replies.

Paa-aa-ang, paa-ang!

"What! Did yer fall in the Yarra, cobber?" calls a Sydney boy to a wet and muddy Victorian, who as he runs past is seen to be bleeding from a gash in the neck.

"Yip-i-addy i-ay i—" they turn a corner to the left "—don't care what—." A red flag waves ahead. They stop for they have been warned of this—an 18-pounder in a shattered building is about to fire across the road. Bang! "Christ! look at that!" someone gasps. A rider coming from the opposite direction has had his head blown off. "Come on! Get a move on!" calls the guard with the red flag—then he sees too. Looking as white as death they go quickly past the gun and its convulsing victim! Bang! again goes the 18-pounder—perhaps now a Fritz is dead.

Dazed and without being conscious of their movements, Ted and his mates go on and turn to the 'right towards Cellar Farm Avenue, passing the military cemetery with its field of white crosses. Ahead, in the battle zone, huge geysers of earth are spouting upwards as the high-explosive shells plunge into the ground and explode, and the air above is clouded with the woolly bursts of shrapnel. How can man live in and pass through that hell?

But forward they go, into the "avenue," a winding sap crowded with life and death. Wounded are helping wounded. A man with a shattered arm is leading out a blinded and bloody-looking figure. Some of the wounded are laughing—others, with sagging jaws, stare ahead. Here's a shaking, trembling, raving madman. The signallers push on to get away from that. There are still four hours to go to "zero." There will be no one left!

"Who yer with?" calls a sergeant. "C Company," they answer. "Get along there!" and they turn left along a trench. It is the second line—the support position. They are to wait here until the 31st and 32nd Battalions charge at 6 o'clock. From this trench British mortars are firing 60-pound bombs; as they swear and sweat at their work, with their tunics off, the gunners inspire confidence. Ted walks over to get a closer view. "Come back," shouts a cobbler, "keep to the parapet, you silly—!" But it is too late, Ted is cracked in the hand. It is only a splinter and has not gone right through. Someone breaks an iodine phial and splashes the contents over the wound, and Ted tries to probe out the piece of metal, with the broken glass. "Bad luck it's not a Blighty," says another, but Ted has collected his first souvenir.

It is now about 3.30 p.m. The barrage lifts and (bang!) comes back. A runner tells how the boys in the front line waved their bayonets over the top to make Fritz believe they were charging when the barrage lifted. "To give him the office to beat it back," shouts someone. "Good God! there can't be any Fritzes left, they are getting it in the neck." Not their artillery, however. Bang! whizzz! crump! smash!

And so on and on through the hours. The gunfire merges into a continuous roar above which are heard only the sharp explosions of nearby shells. To make themselves heard in the din, men have to shout. Now the barrage lifts again, and there is a temporary lull. The onrushing boom of the "heavies" can be heard high above the smaller and low screeching shells. Now it moves back on to Fritz's front line, and almost as quickly German shells rain once more. The boys are all hugging whatever cover they can find, tensely awaiting their fate. Will the order to move or a shell come first? There is nothing to do but wait. The air is rent with mighty explosions, flying mud, bits of wood, and chunks of shells; it is filled with smoke and dust, and filthy bitter-tasting fumes. The walking wounded keep on passing; the stretcher cases have to wait, but every now and then one is carried past on the back of a less wounded cobbler...

"How goes the time?"

"Forty minutes to zero."

Crash! a 5.9 tears through the hedge and explodes twenty yards away. "Rotten shot," one remarks.

Another shell throws a ton of earth over their cover.

Ted remembers the O.C.'s observation at the time of a night move in Egypt. "This is war, men," Ted shouts with an affected grin.

"Too bloody right," one answers.

"How yer feeling?" inquires Ted of an Aussie looking very ill.

"Not bad—bloody fine. Got a fag? Give us a—" but a shell crashes very close on the left and attempts at conversation cease as they watch the victims being dragged from the scene...

"Prepare to move up."

The word is passed along.

It is six.

"Hurrah! they're over."

"Give it to the swine."

"Come on, get a move on."

Bang! "God! that's a mine."

They are ready and anxious to move. The Tommy trench-mortar men have finished their work and are getting into their tunics as they hurry off like a gang of navvies. "Good luck, choom," one calls, as he passes Ted.

As the men of the 30th move up they pass the colonel. He looks cool, calm, and collected, a gloved hand grasps his cane. The move has eased the tension and the strain of waiting for the worst. Ted tries humming "Yip-i-addy" as they go along the sap. Womp! Crash! Ten yards ahead the trench is blown in and a human shriek is heard. From underneath the debris two figures crawl out and one staggers to his feet. He has lost half his head—nose, jaws and mouth—and his bloody tongue hangs down on his chest. Shrinking back from this awful sight so that it

might pass without touching him, Ted feels he wants to shoot him—perhaps it would be best.

"Move on! Don't stand there, shake it up in front!"

They jump up, run along the top and regain the shelter of the sap, such as it is, wounded, dead, and dying crowding the way. Three hundred yards of this and they come to the front line. Here Ted sees a cobbler squatting against the breastwork, and, bending down, he shouts out "Hello! how's things?" But the cobbler does not answer, he has "gone west"—he is dead—and his glassy eyes do not see the troops as they come towards him from the sap.

"To the right, move along!" is heard above the noise. Ted walks behind two Aussies pushing a loaded truck along the wooden rails. He is dazed and does not hear an approaching shell, but Stan pulls him back in time and the truck is blown to pieces.

They meet Sergeant Jack. "Got all your boys?" he asks. "Harry's gone over with the cable. Keep your sigs. together and get over when Harry comes back." Ted's mind comes back to the job and, seeing a major and another officer sitting in a small shelter, he decides that it is the safest place in the line and sits with them. But he is not long seated when a flying lump of earth knocks the wind out of the officer, who is given a swig of whisky from the major's ever handy flask. Ted almost wishes it was he who had stopped the mud. A drop of whisky would be good. Why doesn't the major give some to that crying shell-shocked case over there?

To the right of the front a column of white smoke rises high in the air. "Gas!" shouts someone. "The bomb store's on fire, sir!" reports a corporal after giving a hurried salute. "Well, go and put it out!" advises the major, as he again removes the cork from his flask.

Harry arrives. "What's it like over there?" Ted asks.

"Pretty crook," replies Harry. "You'll see the cable, the end's tied near a dead Fritz. Go for the lick of your life."

The sergeant comes up shouting, "Hey! Haven't y' gone yet? Got cold feet?"

"Cold feet yourself. Don't do your block. You haven't got a station ready for me to send to," Ted retorts.

And then seeing Bert, who has been missing for some time, Ted produces a note-book and calls, "Here you are, Bert, write your next-of-kin's name and address."

There is no farewell. They grasp their rifles, and Ted slings the phone over his shoulder. "You all set? Come on!" he calls, and away they go. Turning right into a bay, they find it blocked by two men who are trying to get a casualty round the corner on a duckboard. The wounded man's leg is hanging off, but he shouts "Good luck lads!" as they climb over the parapet.

God! what sights they see out there. Huddled and stretched out bodies, khaki heaps that were once men—some of A Company digging a trench—others, like themselves, making short crouching runs and flinging themselves down before anything that will afford the slightest cover.

"Hey! Ted!" calls a chap with his breeches blown away as he throws himself down.

"Stick to it, Dab," Ted shouts back, and on they run another twenty yards.

Crump! Bang! Crash! the shells fall. Zipzipzip—zipzip! machine-gun bullets kick up the dirt around them. A lull and off, they rush again. Zipzip! Bang! Another twisted heap of khaki hits the ground.

It is Ted. He does not move. His coppers crawl over to his side. "Where d'you get it?" they ask him. His lips move, but they do not hear his reply. His arm is shattered and blood is gushing from his side. He cannot last much longer—they think he is going west. His eyes ask them to do something. Stan rolls him on to a ground-sheet and drags him yard by yard towards the trench. Shell splinters tear through the sheet. The ground rocks from a nearby shell-burst which almost covers them with mud. Stan drags him on. Ted is in mortal dread of being hit again. At last they come to the sally-port and he is carried on a duckboard into the trench. "You've got the wind up," was Ted's gibe to Stan at Fleurbaix; now Stan has risked his life to bring Ted in.



"Look after him, Harry," says Stan, as he grasps the phone and faces out towards that hell again. "So long Ted, keep your pecker up."

"Thanks—luck," Ted gurgles. "Water! water!" he gasps.

They give him the worst possible thing. He gulps down some rum, chokes, coughs blood, loses his breath; blood bubbles from his side, he is in the throes of death. He quietens. They give him water. If they can stop the bleeding he might survive. With a bandaged lead-pencil they probe back his lung and plug the wound with a field-dressing and pieces torn from a greatcoat. They fix a tourniquet and bind his arm to a piece of duckboard. This completes their rough but honest first-aid.

"Stretcher-bearers! Stretcher-bearers!" they call, but none appear. A runner goes to look for them. It is getting on for ten, and flashing shells are lighting up the darkening sky. The boys tell Ted it is but a scratch and that he is only suffering from shock, but he lets them know that he has no feeling below his belt. They are not aware that four small wounds in his back have paralysed him from the hips down—that is why he does not feel.

The stretcher-bearers arrive. They are Snow and another member of the band. All give a hand and try not to hurt him as they lift his shattered body from the bloody duckboard to the stretcher.

"All set," "You're off to Blighty," "So long," "Keep up your guts," they call to him.

Tears are welling into his eyes—he mutters "S'long—thanks—g'luck."

It is dark. They enter the narrow sap. The 29th Battalion is coming up. "Keep back!" Snow calls, "make way—get over—hop across the top—this man's badly wounded—shift over—we can't stop." And on the bearers go grazing and tearing their hands on the sides of the sap in their endeavour to save him from being bumped by passers-by. Womp! Crash! The falling mud and splinters again fill Ted with fear.

They get him to the dugout aid-post. Has their trip been in vain? Is he dead or alive? He is still; he's not breathing;

death is in his eyes; his lips move—"Water, water;" again he rallies. He sees an old cobbler, Hubert. The dugout is full of wounded. Scissors and jack-knife tear his tunic open. They re-bandage his arm and tighten the tourniquet but do not touch the bloody khaki plug in his side.

The stretcher is lifted outside the dugout and placed on a pair of wheels. After a rough ride along the shell-lit road, Ted is transferred to a motorambulance—the engine is vibrating. "All ready," someone shouts, and the ambulance, with four stretcher cases and two others on the floor, rumbles along the road.

It is twelve hours since the rider was killed by the 18-pounder firing across this road and much has happened since then, yet Ted's racked brain is filled with horror at the thought of the gun firing again. Have they passed it? Will it fire? They must be getting near. Crash! The brakes screech. An enemy shell has burst ahead. Had it arrived ten seconds later they would all be dead. Again the ambulance gets going, but now and then it has to stop until Ted gets his breath. One of the cases is raving mad, others groan with pain, and before the field ambulance is reached one has passed out.

Lying on stretchers in the open at the field ambulance are rows and rows of men, some silent, others crying for water, and others again craving their turn to go into the station. Ted's turn comes. He is put on a table. The doctor thinks he should be dead, but Ted talks and asks questions.

"What's that for?" he asks, as the doctor gives him an injection in the stomach.

"Anti-tetanus, to prevent lock-jaw," the doctor explains. "How old are you?"

"Seventeen last month," Ted answers, hoping he will not be sent back to the front before he is eighteen. He is then given morphia and the doctor and an orderly proceed to dress his wounds.

Ted is taken outside and the orderly goes to get him water. A mist forms before his eyes and he loses the sense of feeling. The hours of torture have ended. He drifts and thinks, and in his semi-conscious moments his mother's

face appears. He feels her kiss and is then wafted into the unconsciousness of blessed sleep.

Of the other four original signallers of the 30th Battalion, Jim S. was killed in this battle and Eric W. was wounded and taken prisoner. Wal C. was wounded and invalided home soon after Fromelles; and Tom H. went on to get his commission and lose an arm at Villers-Bretonneux in 1918.

Stan H., who carried, or rather dragged, Ted in from No Man's Land, went through the war without a scratch. After bringing Ted in he went back and established, though not for long, the only signalling station of the 8th Brigade in the enemy trenches that day. In a letter to Ted's people some months later he said: "I must tell you why I have never answered your letters. I did not want to write at the time when you were under the impression I was a hero. I dragged him out, that was all—it was not a brave deed. If it has turned sorrow into happiness then I say thank God I did it—he is not forgotten by us and never will be."

Later Tom H. (then O.C.) wrote: "I didn't realize how I liked that kid until he got knocked, now I am sorry he is not with me—he was a good signaller and a good worker. One thing is certain, if he were with me now he would be my sergeant. Still he's better off, this game is no place for youngsters, however willing. He's done his bit."



## CHAPTER XV. BOULOGNE

A clearing station—A hospital train—Le  
Casino Hospital, Boulogne—An operation—A  
blood transfusion—Tetanus—Other operations  
—Sisters and visitors.

(20 July-2 September 1916)

We left Ted asleep at the field ambulance, whence he was taken by motor ambulance to a clearing station. Here, in the early hours of the morning, he awakened. In his semi-conscious state, he became aware of a doctor bending over his stretcher, and of orderlies passing to and fro with enamel mugs and bottles in a bare barn-like building; he could hear groans, moans, screams, and laughter; saw a blanket being pulled over the head of the chap on the next stretcher; felt a prick in the arm and found himself slipping away; marching, singing, trying to yell, seeing his companion of the march with half a head; seeing it all again. But where was he? No—not there, he could not hear the guns; but, instead, "Water, water," "Shut yer mouth," "Let a bloke sleep," moans, groans, and laughter; and going off again.

It is daylight. He is being carried on his stretcher. He cannot move. His left knee is still resting on his chest, the sinews having contracted when he was knocked. As the leg cannot be pulled down to allow of his being placed in a bunk in the hospital train, his stretcher—Snow's stretcher—is put on the floor. The train starts. A sister in a white cap—the first British woman he had seen for years, no only eight months—kneels beside him; he sees her quite close, then she fades away, but no, she is still with him: cutting his muddy bloody uniform away, washing his face, putting his letters and diary into a peggy bag. She asks his name, his age, and says: "Come, my dear, a little drink." She wishes they might be going to Blighty together, he is going to have such a wonderful time over there. She gives him some chocolate. The doctor comes, they adjust some bandages and stop a blood leak. The train goes on. He must not try to talk. He goes to sleep—he wakes and tries to call out, blood gushes from his mouth, he vomits the blood swallowed in his sleep, the sister comes, he chokes, loses his breath, they give him oxygen. He revives, the sister washes him again, she holds his hand and stays with him until the train reaches Boulogne. She goes with the orderlies who carry him to the platform, then stoops over,

kisses him, and is gone. He sees his mother, he wants to live—he will live.

It is afternoon. The ambulance arrives at No. 13 General Hospital (Le Casino) and is placed in Ward 3C (Le Salon du Baccava), an oval room with decorated walls and ceiling and large windows looking out over the English Channel. An immediate operation is ordered. He passes through spacious halls to the theatre; a mask blots out the bright dazzling light; a few breaths of anaesthetic; he is wafted through miles and miles of beautiful marble halls; all the horror has gone; no longer is he fighting for life; the staircases and halls are leading to Heaven; how quiet and how peaceful! Now he is coming back, at first gently hovering, sinking a little, hovering again, falling through clouds and space, floating a little, falling, feeling pain, wanting to call out, going off, coming back, trying to move, he feels the pain. Something is gripping his wrist like a vice, now but a gentle touch. A nurse is taking his pulse. He opens his eyes, tries to smile, sinks back again; the pain, a prick in the arm, a drink from the spout of a feeder. He is feeling better but must not talk. He cannot move a limb—can only breathe and sleep.

The full extent of Ted's injuries has been revealed under the anaesthetic: g.s.w. (gunshot wounds) in left chest, consisting of a small hole just below the neck and a large cavity four inches in diameter on the left side (caused by a machine-gun), as a result of which the lung has been shattered and the small piece left is totally collapsed, while his heart has moved and can be seen through the hole. The right arm is smashed through the elbow (another machine-gun bullet), and a small piece of shrapnel lies embedded in the back of the hand; in his back are four small shrapnel wounds (one having partially paralysed the spine—the lower organs of the body function unknowingly). In addition there are two old, open wounds on the side of his right foot (legacies from Egypt). He cannot move his left arm, which lays twisted and contracted on his chest. The left leg has been tied down. He is helpless.

The operation was performed in order to clean him up. His right arm is stretched out on an iron extension splint; bits of smashed ribs, dead lung and flesh have been removed from his body; a blood transfusion has been

given, and now he is sleeping in the Casino's Salon du Baccava—built for the pleasures of the rich, but now filled with the wrecks of human folly.

The following day Ted contracted tetanus and for ten days suffered racking pain: spasms shooting from the toes through the body and bending it back and back so that head almost touched his feet; throat cords taut and stretched from chin on to chest; the jaws locked fast and mouth contracted into a grin. He was given countless injections of serum, and as many anaesthetics as his shattered chest would permit, and he had to be forcibly fed. Thus he survived the attack of tetanus, which is so often fatal, and results in the worst death of all.

Operations followed almost daily. On one occasion four inches of rib were removed without an anaesthetic, as Ted's chest condition was too bad to permit of its being administered. Dressings were painful, but not so the chest wound, except when twice each day he was turned on his side so that the cavity could be emptied of pus, which sometimes amounted to as much as a kidney dish full. Although he had to be fed, he enjoyed his food, especially cabbage. Sister D. bet him half a franc he could not suck a raw egg. He did so, and kept the coin as a souvenir.

Sometimes Ted was the only patient in the ward, but not for long. A draft would no sooner be evacuated to Blighty than another battle would send a proportion of its wounded to fill the hospital again.

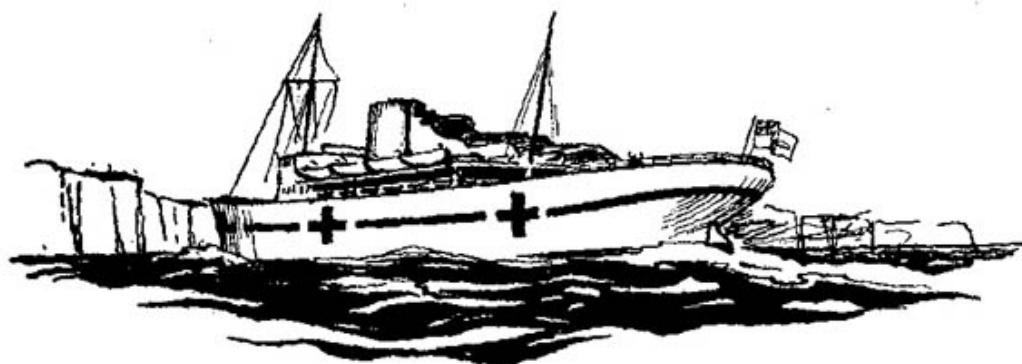
French visitors came round with cigarettes and sweets. They were mostly old folk and looked very sad. Ted liked best to talk with the sisters when they could spare him a little time. They talked mostly of the future—after the war and not of it. The R.A.M.C. chap who gave his blood for the transfusion came to see Ted before going "out there;" he was killed a few weeks later.

Sometimes the chaplain was sent for to say a few last words. Ted agreed with all he said, but did not understand he was supposed to be dying. "Thanks Dad, see you tomorrow," he whispered on one of these occasions. The chaplain on his future visits which became regular, read the boy the war news instead of the prayer-book.

Ted got on well with all but one orderly, who, because the patient cried out for attention one night, came and roughly put a dirty hand over his mouth. This worried Ted all the next day, but, instead of reporting the incident, he waited until the orderly came on duty again and then, with as much strength as he could put into his voice called out: "You dirty German bastard! You're worse than the one who shot me. I'll come back and kill—," but he got no further. The other patients cheered, the sister came in and the orderly went—for good.

Ted was in this hospital for 45 days and the conduct of that orderly formed his only complaint. Thanks to the wonderful treatment, an air-filled mattress, and healthy flesh, his back wounds healed. The paralysis gradually lessened, but with the return of feeling he suffered continual pain. Able to move only the fingers of his left hand, he still had to be fed. Once, when under the influence of morphia, he sang "The Soldier's Farewell to Egypt" and sometimes, when coming out of the anaesthetic, he gave his fellow-patients some entertainment, but generally he was much too ill to whisper, let alone talk and sing. One day almost dead, the next would find him trying to sing; later he would go down again, only to come up for more on the morrow.

His diary was in great demand, but Sister D. would not allow it to be taken out of her care. On 2 September 1916, she entered in it: "Little Corporal Rowland going to England to-day. We all wish him the best of luck, he's been such a good patient."



## CHAPTER XVI. BLIGHTY

A Channel crossing—A Dover welcome—Fort Pitt—The first night—Mrs B.—Some friends and two sky pilots—Visits from Major H.

(3 September-12 October 1916).

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Ted did not want to leave Boulogne and all the good friends he had made, but they told him he would receive much better treatment and have a far better time in Blighty, and they treated him to champagne on the eve of his departure.

Dressed in a Tommy uniform to which was attached a special label, and with a letter from his present doctor to the M.O. in Blighty in his pocket, he was put on a special air bed-stretcher ready for transport. The stretcher-bearers came. "Ready—lift" followed by "Good-bye," "Cheerio Aussie," "Thanks Sister," "So long Tommy," "Good luck, Choom," and he was on the way. Another parting over—another stage begun.

A short ambulance ride, the familiar vibration over the cobble *pavé*, no waiting at the wharf, immediate embarkation, inspection of label at the top of the gangway, an order, taken down a companionway on a slanting stretcher, met by a sister, and his air-stretcher placed on top of a cot. "You all right?" Temperature taken. "Yes. Orderly! A drink of milk for this man" and she passes on to the next.

The vessel is moving. Formerly a Belgian mail liner, she is now a well-fitted hospital ship. She begins to roll, the sister comes round looking ill, and does not come again. The ship goes on through the night and many are seasick. Ted in his weak state wonders whether they will stop a torpedo or a mine. Would they carry him up on deck or could he walk up if placed on his feet? Would the stretcher float, and if he fell off would the port-hole in his chest fill with water? He thinks he might float for a little while, and pictures a bottle bobbing up and down in the water; as it sinks he feels himself suddenly fall out of bed—and awakens from his stupor in a cold sweat. The orderly refills the hot-water bottle and holds the spout of a feeder to his lips; that's good, it's got a kick in it. The orderly winks, a good fellow that. And Ted, thinking of other good fellows, falls asleep.



"Blighty" "Dover" "Home, choom." It is early morning. They see the white cliffs through the portholes. Good. There is no delay. The stretchers are placed in rows on the quayside station awaiting the hospital train. English folk come round with cigarettes and sweets. It is drizzling rain. A lady holds an umbrella over Ted, while another lights a cigarette between her own lips and gives it to him. She asks where he was wounded.

"Somewhere in France" he tells her.

But she wants to know about his wounds.

"Oh, just a bit in the arm and chest, nothing much."

"Why can't you use your other arm?"

"Housemaid's knee in the elbow through leaning on *estaminet* counters."

She laughs. Where does he live? "Australia." He doesn't look like an Australian. Does he know a Mr Adams in Adelaide? No, he lives in Sydney and only visits Adelaide for week-ends, but he'll look him up.

"Don't worry him," says Mrs Umbrella, "he looks tired."

He is, too, and his respirations have doubled. The cigarette and talking have had an even worse effect than the cigar and excitement of the day leaving Sydney. He vomits: an orderly comes and shakes the blanket and then turns it up the other way. Ted apologizes. The ladies hope they have not upset him. Oh, no, just seasickness—that's all—delayed action, always affects him that way. Miss Cigarette tucks a hanky under his chin as the train arrives.

"Mr Adams, Adelaide."

"Yes—good-bye."

"Thank you, cheerio."

"Good-bye."

So this is Blighty. Ted says he is to be left on the stretcher, but they bring a doctor who orders him to be put in a cot. The sister says it's a shame. The move hurts him, and the splint drops on the bed. He yells, "Go easy," and, when the

sister goes to get him something, he calls one of the orderlies an awkward b——. On the journey his back aches, and by the time the train reaches Chatham he has got a bed sore. Blast Blighty. Why did he leave France? Why did he leave home?

They come to lift him on to a stretcher. "Now, go easy."

"Don't be afraid, choom."

"Who's afraid? Who's a choom?"

"Steady—lift."

"Good, thanks, CHOOM!"

The ambulance ride to Fort Pitt Military Hospital is the last straw, Ted being only semi-conscious on arrival. Undressed on the bed by two orderlies, he suffers much pain as they try to get the tunic off, and forgets about the letter in his pocket for the M.O. A sister comes, takes his temperature and pulse, and tells an orderly to bring a four-hourly chart. She and another sister dress his arm, and for the first time he sees four inches of jagged bone sticking through the flesh. The doctor orders morphia, and Ted sleeps, but not for long.

All that night he raves and lives the last twelve months over again. The vision of the chap with half his head blown away is everywhere—on the troopship, in Cairo, in the *estaminet*, in the next bed, as the orderly. He sees it all again. He hears Crrang! tut-tut-tut, boom! and awakens.

"Good morning!"

The sister has placed a paper-shaded hurricane lamp on the locker and a bowl of water on the bed-table, so this is what he heard. But good morning? It is still dark. With the assistance of an orderly, she pulls the bed clothes from underneath the top blanket, to find one side of the sheet wet with pus. The sister looks. Yes, he has a wound in the chest. When are they going to empty it? The orderly fetches a doctor and they receive a shock when the dressing is taken down. Why has he not told them of this? Ted suddenly remembering the letter, the orderly is sent to find it and to inform another doctor, who comes in a

dressing-gown. The patient asks to be turned on his side so that the cavity may empty, but they won't hear of it; he must not be moved. A rubber tube is brought and the pus syphoned off before the orderly returns with the letter.

By this time most of the patients have been wakened, and there's a rattle of mugs as an orderly comes round with coffee. Ted calls, "Hey! What about me?" Yes, he can have some. "Get him a feeder."

The doctors ask a lot of questions. "Yes" "No," "Yes" "Don't know" "Seventeen" "19th July" "Sydney."

"Would you like anything, lad?"

"Yes, please, beer."

"You shall have it. Anything else?"

"A wash."

"Right-oh! I'll give you a five-pound note when you are better."

From the next bed comes an Aussie voice: "That's right, put the wind up the poor cow, you b—— goat."

The doctors leave and the washing is proceeded with.

A few days pass. The ward is very comfortable. There are steam radiators along the walls and shaded reading lights over the beds. The floor is highly polished and everything is spotlessly clean, for this is one of the surgical wards of a regular military hospital. Mac, the only other Australian in the ward, in the next bed to Ted, has a badly smashed arm, but what worries him most is Ted's welfare, and he takes it upon himself to keep order. He insists that Ted must not be wakened for morning washes; but himself sometimes wakes the boy up when abusing others for laughing, talking, and groaning during the early morning treatment. A red shaded light worried Ted at night, so Mac put it out with a well-aimed bottle and was threatened with being sent to another hospital.

The doctor dresses Ted's chest wounds, mopping out the cavity with gauze pads on large forceps. This does not hurt, in fact it tickles his back ribs on the inside and

makes him laugh. He does not learn until later that one slip on the doctor's part and the forceps might touch his heart. A torch is kept on the locker so that interested visiting doctors may have a look at Ted's works; the youngster hears much of their talk—"The pericardium, yes, quite distinct, it has moved, yes, to the right and a little higher up, the shock, the explosion..." Anyhow, it keeps on beating and, as Ted once said, "The open-air life agrees with it." He tells one of them that he can account for it being a little higher up, because it jumped into his mouth when he got cracked. One day he asked for a mirror to be held near the hole, and when he saw his heart he remarked that it looked like a piece of meat. Maybe he expected it to be of gold. At one time there was some talk of putting a silver plate in his side, so he asked that it be engraved with the date and name of the battle, but the idea was later abandoned.

On Mac's advice Ted complained about being disturbed so much, and so in future, while the doctor attended to his chest, a sister would dress his arm and bed sore and fix up any other matters that needed attention. This was a much better arrangement. At eleven o'clock a V.A. would feed him with a bottle of beer.

In the hospital were a few other Australians, including Rex F., who had also been wounded at Fromelles and passed Ted near Cellar Farm. He was still having a bad time with his arm, but in between operations he came to sit with Ted and feed him with chocolate covered biscuits and other dainties from the canteen. Ted was generally too ill to speak, but his cobbler would nevertheless sit by him, when he might have been enjoying a concert or some other form of recreation. Occasionally, however, they conversed and laughed over old times, yet did not say much about the war. At intervals they even talked of the future, although Rex never for a moment thought there could be one for Ted, nor, in fact, did anyone there hold out any hope of his survival.

The short talks and long hours of silent company and mutual sufferings shared by these two fellow-sufferers laid the foundation of a friendship much greater than most folk ever know. Came a time when there was a long interval between visits. Ted wondered what was wrong and, when he learnt that Rex was going through a close

battle with death, he asked to be taken on his bed to see him. Fortunately this was Rex's last operation, and he pulled through, although it was some time ere he was again able to renew his visits to Ted.

Mrs O.E.H.B., an Australian whose surgeon husband was serving with the British Navy, was the Australian Red Cross representative at this hospital. More than anyone else she held out hope for Ted's recovery, and gave him the strength and will to live through the months that followed. For hours each day she would sit with and comfort him according to his mood; reading to him, writing his letters, talking of his home-coming and his future, what others had done and were doing to overcome their disabilities. In fact, she took him right away from the present and set his mind along the highway of desire and pleasant anticipation. She gave him the incentive to strive, painting many pretty word pictures of his mother, his home, the sunshine, the Australian bush, its birds and flowers. Her quiet sympathy, her happy talks, her cheerfulness and understanding, her attention to his every want expressed and otherwise, made him live, and he looked forward to her daily visits. She made him pyjama coats that could be put on without moving him unduly, and small down pillows that relieved and comforted the aching parts. There were times when he was very ill, and others when he abandoned all hope. It was then that her gentle touch, her kiss, her whispered "Bill" did what medicine and medical skill could never do. They brought him back—and with confidence she would leave him in the care of her strength and love, sleeping until the morrow. As Ruskin says of women in "War": "Such absolute helpmates you are that no man can stand without that help, nor labour in his own strength."

Many other friends—doctors, sisters, V.A. nurses, wardsmaids, orderlies, and convalescent patients—gave untiring service, sympathetic treatment, and cheer. Their kindly words of encouragement, their jocular remarks, their little acts of kindness smoothed the roughness of the way and helped to clean and heal the wounds of the mind for which there are no lotions other than love and understanding. Some of the good souls who helped to pull him through, Ted never met. From one or other of them came fresh cream daily by post from Devonshire, oysters from Whitstable, champagne, turtle soup, cases of stout,

fruit, and other nourishing luxuries; and once there arrived a box of grapes as big as plums with a card inscribed: "To Cpl Rowland from Her Majesty the Queen."

A locker on each side of the bed, a well stocked "cellar" underneath, and a railing on either side to prevent any chance movement that might cause pain, upset the regimental orderliness of the ward, but this was overlooked in the general process of spoiling him in every conceivable way.

A parson with a long face (a conscientious objector) who came round the ward with a prayer-book in one hand and a bunch of grapes in the other was much disliked. He did not visit all the patients but only those of his own denomination who happened to be on the D.I. (dangerously ill) list. The first and last time he came to see Ted, he woke him up to ask:

"Do you know the Lord?"

"Yes" answers Ted. "I was enjoying His blessing of sleep."

"Awaken unto the Lord." (He thereupon plucked two grapes from the bunch and placed them on the locker.)  
"Come, pray with me for forgiveness."

"What for?" says Ted.

"The scripture sayeth, thou shalt not kill."

"And I say I'd like to kill you, you miserable swine. Go!"

He did, taking with him his peace offering of two grapes.

The R.C. chaplain was a good old sport. Known as "Peppermint Jim" always smiling, he would go from bed to bed, dip his podgy hand into a bag, extract a peppermint and place it into the open mouth of the patient, sister, or visitor. He did not assume an air of superiority, but radiated and inspired good fellowship as man to man. His happy countenance caused many to seek his comfort, not for assistance over the divide, but for help to live.

"Hello, my boy! You look well to-day."

"Yes, but I'm not one of your boys."

"You are all my boys. You smile. You like my peppermints. You like to see me, eh?"

"Yes, Dad."

"Keep smiling. God bless you. Yes, I'll come again."

Major H., formerly second-in-command of the 30th Battalion but now C.O. of the 54th, came to see Ted. He had probably forgotten the little incident at the Showground Camp when he let the boy off with a caution. Anyway he did not mention it. They had a long talk about the old battalion, and (from their respective points of view) some of the amusing episodes connected with it, and had just started on a bag of chocolates when the sister advised Ted that he had had enough excitement for one day. The major called again before returning to France, but left, with the conviction that he had seen the last of Ted, who at this time was occupying the corner bed, it being the most convenient to the morgue. As usual, however, Ted derived much good from the visit, and enjoyed particularly the conversation of two Tommy patients opposite who thought that the needle, given him after the major's departure, had put Ted to sleep.

"D'you see t'orfficer coom t' see Bill?" said one. "Not 'arf," replied the other. "A bleedin' craarn 'n' all. Dyer 'ear 'em larfin'?"

"Ay, Bill's well in wi' t' 'eads, is Bill."

"'E is 'n' all. 'Is farver owns the Yarra Bank or somefink—I 'e'rd 'im tellin' a ole tart t'other day abart it."

"That's nowt to t' lad nar, choom."

"All 'is parnds and craarns carn 'elp 'im, 'e'll soon be gorn nar."

"Ay, poor lad, 'e's gime orlright, choom."

"Not arf, 'e ain't. Struf! Fancy larfin'."

And then, to relieve their awe, Ted (drunk with morphia) sang:

*We are a ragtime army,  
The A-N-Z-A-C!  
We cannot shoot, we won't salute;  
What bally use are we?  
And when we get to Berlin  
, The Kaiser he will say:  
Hoch, hoch, mein Gott,  
What a bloody rotten lot,  
Are the A-N-Z-A-C!*

One day, the King's surgeon, Sir Frederick came to see Ted and gave orders for the treatment he desired the boy to receive prior to his performing on him an "Eslanders" operation. This would be the most extensive chest operation yet performed in the hospital. When Sir Frederick had gone, Mac remarked to Ted: "You're lucky, that's King George's doc. He operated on King Ted for appendicitis and on the Kaiser's throat—pity he didn't chop his bloody head off." And so Ted was moved out on to the veranda to be fattened up and got ready for the operation.



## CHAPTER XVII. TOUCH AND GO

A bottle of ribs—A future mother-in-law—  
Smile, damn you, smile—Two parties.

(13 October 1916-5 February 1917)

Had Ted been superstitious, he would probably have objected to the "hop-over" being staged on Friday, 13 October, but the only thing that worried him was having



to go without breakfast that morning. In the end he got into trouble for eating a quarter-pound of chocolate and a banana just before zero hour (8 a.m.).

Waiting to undergo an operation is like waiting to go over the top. The preparation and empty stomach did not help to make matters better, and it was a relief when the trolley came and the farewells were taken.

"Hope you like the pictures, Aussie."

"Good luck, Bill."

"He'll give us some fun coming out of the dope."

"Not 'arf."

"Sing us 'Mrs Brown's Daughter' when you come back."

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"Can I 'av' yer beer, Bill?"

"Yes. So long. Here we go, Mum; Dad's driving."

A brief silence and the trolley arrived at the theatre.

"How are you, Bill?"

"Good-oh!"

"What! Do you feel cold?"

"Oh no, just got the delicious trembles."

"Got any false teeth?"

"No, why? What's the big idea? I've already had three of those."

"It's all right, Bill, it's another way of giving an anaesthetic, that's all. You'll be asleep soon."

Going—going—"Don't forget to save the bones"—going—going—"So l-ong"—gone.

It was a lengthy operation. The left wall of the chest was incised and drawn back, portions of six ribs being

removed. The skin that had grown over the small piece of lung (totally collapsed these three months) was dissected, and the piece of lung treated and inflated until it resumed its function of breathing. Rubber tubes were inserted here and there, the chest wall was brought back and sewn up, and the surgeon's work was complete. He and his assistants however, had more than one anxious moment before the patient regained consciousness, about midnight.

Ted was at first conscious of sound, then of light and pain, and later still of four stands round the bed supporting containers from which rubber tubes ran to various parts of his body. Two of these irrigated the chest and right arm respectively, while a third injected glycerine to remove the anaesthetic. The outlets of these emptied into a tub beneath the bed. The fourth tube had no outlet, its function being to run saline into his almost bloodless veins. "You'd think a man was a blanky Murrumbidgee irrigation farm," he said some days later.

Weeks went by. Mere words cannot tell what Ted endured, nor, for that matter, can they adequately express the suffering of those who nursed and watched and waited over him day and night. Some weeks after the operation the sister in charge of the ward wrote to his mother: "...he has had a very serious operation. He has been so brave and tried very hard to get well, but in spite of it all a few days ago I really thought he would go under. However, the last two days he has seemed a little stronger and the pain has not been quite so acute."

A bottle of ribs in spirit now adorned the top of Ted's locker. The Yorkshire boy in the next bed who had had both legs amputated complained of the pain in his toes, yet he laughed until he was ill when Ted said: "That's nothing to the pain I have when the nurse dusts my bottle of ribs."

Ted said he was feeling better, but he was moved into a little room at the end of the ward. This place was really too quiet and too suggestive of the morgue—the boys called it the "Dying Room." But it was not always quiet, and to this day is probably haunted by the yells of pain as well as the ghosts of those who went west within its walls. It was here that Ted first met Mrs C., who, in response to

a cable from one of Ted's cousins in Australia, actually came to the hospital to make arrangements for Ted's burial. Quite generously though pessimistically she loaned him a pound, and promised to come again. She did; and Ted, hearing something of her small daughter (R.) who had been rescued from a Belgian town within a few hours of its being occupied by the Germans, asked that she be brought to see him.

Sometime towards the end of January 1917, Mrs C. brought R. to see him. Ere this the chest wounds had healed and he had regained some movement in his left hand and elbow. A ward concert did not permit of their talking very much, but R.'s squeezing hand, as it registered the beats of "Pack Up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit-bag" "We've Come Up from Somerset," and "Back Home in Tennessee" to the accompaniment of the music and singing, conveyed something else to Ted and impressed upon his mind the picture of her sweet youth and cheerful loveliness. Her laughing eyes and rosy cheeks, crowned with tam-o'-shanter of green, he likened unto a blushing rosebud sparkling with dew in the early sunlight of a new-born day. Yes, life was good, he had much to live for. But it was another five years and more ere Mrs C. again brought her rosebud to Ted, and it is now thirteen years since they married.

But to return to Fort Pitt in November 1916. We find Ted, though still seriously ill, sufficiently well to send his greetings home in the form of a pencil sketch.



This effort took him half a day, for it had to be done with his left hand, which was not then even recovered sufficiently to enable him to feed himself.

During December Ted received some money from home and shouted the forty patients in the ward to pork sausages and tomatoes. As the wardsmaid, Molly, cooked each batch in the little frying pan, they were given out, and just when the last patient was being served the first commenced being sick. With the exception of Ted and a few others all were violently ill, and Ted was most unpopular with the night sister who was kept going all the time. Molly, by the way, *was* a good sport. At the hospital there was a "wet" canteen for the staff, and she "ran the rabbit" for the boys.

On Friday 19 January (Friday must have been his lucky day), exactly six months from the date he was wounded, Ted asked to be lifted out of bed. They stood him on his feet and—with right arm hanging in a splint, left arm in a sling, body bent, and two stiff legs—he walked. This feat was so much beyond their expectation that he had to perform in front of the matron and the chief M.O., and then he retired to the little room, where a Scotty, minus half his face, and J.B.W., a Tommy with both legs spread-eagled on splints, had a party waiting for him. Scotty had

kept his Halloween pumpkin-cake for the occasion, and J.B.W. had saved up a lot of ginger ale bottles which now, thanks to Molly, were filled with beer and hidden between his legs underneath the counterpane.

The trio had their party and a song. Scotty taught Ted to drink out of a glass placed on the mantelpiece, and all went well until Ted's legs began to wobble to the strains of "On the Mississippi." He tried to push himself through the swing doors but only succeeded in getting his head through, when the doctor came along the passage. Ted's eyes told the tale.

"It's you, Bill. The first day out of bed. After all we have done for you, and you get drunk."

"Sorry, Doc., can't 'elp b-b-blood trans—trans—fusion (hic). 'E must of b-been a (hic) b-b-boozer. Never t-tochd it mashelf (hic)—"

"Well, you're making up for it now. Come on, you tough young scoundrel," and laughing, the doctor carried him off to bed.

Ted was a bit off-colour the next day, but two nights later he walked through the snow and some hours after the same doctor discovered him having supper with a night sister in front of a fire. Again he was carried back to bed, his laughter when the doctor spanked him waking up all the other patients in the ward.

Another day he was found in the operating theatre, with the orderlies displaying the various instruments used on his case and explaining the several phases of the operation. He tried to souvenir the pair of rib-cutting shears, which have a straight and a curved blade, but he was caught in the act of trying to manipulate it into his sling.

One day an Australian surgeon came to see him. The visitor turned out to be none other than the famous Colonel Ryan, who was reputed for his hardness in sending the boys back to the line.

"Well, my boy, so you are only seventeen?"

"Yes, sir."

"There is a hospital ship going to Australia soon. Would you like to go home or remain in England for a year or two?"

"How about my arm?"

"You will get just as good treatment out there. Do you feel fit for the trip?"

"Too right. Home sweet home will do me, sir. I'll come back and have a look at Blighty some other day."

"Very well, my boy, but don't get excited, you must take every care of yourself," and as he left he scruffed Ted's hair.

Ted thought he was breaking the news to Mrs B. but she knew even more about the arrangement, and when she said "Yes, I have been speaking with Colonel Ryan," Ted could not at first believe that the kindly chap who had been talking with him was the famous "Gutter King."

Chook F. (one of the signallers Ted introduced to the battalion from Zeitoun) came to visit Ted. He had been wounded in the foot but was sent back to France, got an issue of gas, and died at Melbourne on the way home. Harry B. also visited the hospital when he came across on leave from France. He too was subsequently invalided home, and some fifteen years later he wrote to congratulate Ted on having survived his 53rd operation: "...you cannot blame people if they regard you as a 'bit of a curio' (to use your own words). Had I not known you I would never have believed any human being could have gone through so much and lived...I vividly recall my visit to you—and the bottle containing your ribs—what souvenirs!"

On Sunday, 4 February, Mrs B. took Mac and Ted to her home at the naval dockyard. They had a most enjoyable time and were put at ease in their difficulty of trying to do the right thing at the bounteous table. Having for so long been cut off from such refinement made it bad enough, but—each being handicapped with the loss of an arm, and in Ted's case, the partial loss of the other as well—it might indeed have been most embarrassing had not Mrs B. exercised much kindly consideration in her preparations for the event. Yes, it was an event, for that matter the only

homelike experience Ted had during his eighteen months abroad, unless his supper with Yvonne be permitted to come under that heading. Some jolly songs were sung, and a visiting naval officer, because he was in the home of a fleet surgeon where two "war scarred heroes" were being entertained; thought it fitting to sing:

*I've got the hooperzootic and I don't know where it  
is,  
It may be in my finger, it may be in my thumb,  
It may be in the corner of my pericardium, etc., etc.*

Driving back to the hospital with Mrs B., Ted felt he was leaving much behind and all that night and the next day he suffered again the pain and joy of "going away." He was going home—he dreamed that he was there, sitting on the wood-box in the kitchen watching Mother cook. The dream faded, he was leaving home, marching to the music of the band, in Egypt, in France, in hospital, and now—he was going home, going away; and something of his innermost feelings must have escaped that old parting grin when he said "Good-bye." Good-bye to Fort Pitt, its garrison of loving hearts, its Great Heart Mrs B. Good-bye to all its suffering—no, that's already gone—but not good-bye to all its happy times, which will remain a living memory.



## CHAPTER XVIII. TROOPS IN TRANSIT

An ambulance ride—Muscles at Harefield—A brief leave—The last letter home.

(6th February-20th February 1917).

About 9 a.m. on Tuesday, 6 February, an Australian motor-ambulance arrived at Fort Pitt to collect three cot cases and a sitting patient for transfer to Harefield Hospital. No provision having been made to close in the back of the vehicle, it was therefore hardly suitable for a long journey in the middle of the coldest English winter for twenty years.

According to the instructions received by the driver, Ted was to be the sitting patient, on the floor of the truck, with one stretcher case overhead and two alongside. Fort Pitt would not hear of such treatment. Orderlies, wardsmaids, V.As, sisters, and two doctors, gathered for the send off, insisted that this was impossible. Here was a military problem of the first magnitude. The driver had signed for his freight; the patients were no longer on the strength of Fort Pitt; it was the receiving hospital's responsibility to supply "crates and packing;" the said receiving authorities did not consider that an arm-and-chest case now eighteen days able to walk after six months in bed warranted a stretcher; the forwarding hospital considered that it did; there was no provision in the King's Regulations for lending a stretcher; something had to be done; but what? An orderly had a brain wave. "Give him one of ours;" but the Q.M. would not hear of it. A sister said something to a doctor; the doctor whispered to the driver; the sister whispered to an orderly; the orderly went away; the ambulance moved round the corner. The farewell party, now somewhat diminished, followed the ambulance, and after another little wait, the orderly came creeping round the corner with a stretcher. "Ha ha! all is not lost" said Ted. "Sh-h," from the doctor, "come on;" and, as they eased him down, Ted said "Thanks Doc., thanks Sister, thanks Alf., where did you pinch it?"

All this to-do about nothing had the effect of hastening the much delayed departure. The stretcher was no sooner run into place than off. "Good luck" "Good—," a wave or two—finish. Something like a departure, thought Ted, as the ambulance rattled through the gate.

This little episode was Ted's first experience of bad management since Fromelles—unfortunately, it was not to be the last. The driver lost his way. To the patients, whose view for mile upon mile was restricted to a glimpse of the retreating snow-covered landscape through the open back



of the ambulance, the trip was uninteresting. Now and again they stopped a snow-ball or a few cheers from some children, and sometime after noon they pulled up at an inn.

"What's this, the hospital?"

"No," replied the driver. "The Dew Drop Inn."

"Good! mine's a pint of rum."

The driver shouted coffee royal and off they went again. This was the only nourishment they had from breakfast time until 8 o'clock that night. Evidently the army regulation of twenty-four hours' rations for moving troops did not apply to hospital patients in transit. Towards dusk the driver shouted again, but this time only verbally.

"London Bridge!"

"Is that all." "Where does the King hang out?" "How about taking us to the Palace for the night?"

"Houses of Parliament!—The Abbey!" again the driver shouted.

"B—— the Abbey, we want a feed." "Step on it." "Where's this 'Wherefield' joint, how much farther."

"Won't be long n—" swish! the vehicle went from one side of the road to the other, came halfway back, and then turned completely round.

"What the Hell!"

"All right, only a skid."

"Cripes! Thought we'd arrived at Piccadilly Circus."

It was dark when they arrived at Harefield. The driver went to the office only to return with the bad news:—

"You'll have to wait. You're not expected. Your papers have not arrived."

"Bloody good job." "What a lousy hole." "Take us back to Fort Pitt." "Tell 'em we'll call again to-morrow" were some of the comments from the exasperated quartette.

A wait of about half an hour and a party of stretcher-bearers arrived. Ted, who was dumped on to a hard bed on an open veranda, asked for a drink of milk and was told to wait until supper time. Stiff with the cold, aching, and hungry, he was undressed and covered with bed clothes. Coming from a modern hospital where he had enjoyed every comfort, including a water-filled mattress, it was little wonder that this reception, following on the day's miserable journey from Chatham, caused him much distress. All at once, he heard a genial voice exclaim:

"What's up, 'Muscles,' do you feel cold?"

Looking up, Ted saw the smiling face of a Digger, and glancing down, observed that he had lost a leg. But that was more than Ike could see of Ted, and so, wondering just how much of him was left, he had called the boy "Muscles." "Mutton" at school because he was fat; "Bargo" because he had a big head; "Freezer" at Liverpool Camp, because of his tailless shirt; "Enfant" in France; and just recently "Bill"—all these went the way of most youthful nicknames, but "Muscles" (more affectionately "Muss") was to be a fixture. At the time, or rather two days later, he weighed six stone ten.

Muscles laughed and said "Yes," he felt cold. Ike went off on his crutches to return with two blankets and a hot-water bottle—off his own bed, but Muss did not know of that until the following morning, when he learnt that Ike had spent the night sitting by the fire in the ward.

So far, Ike was the only bright being in this otherwise cheerless place. In comparison with the sisters at Chatham, those so far met with here seemed indifferent, but perhaps this judgment was not quite fair, because there is no doubt that Ted had been spoiled at Fort Pitt. In the early hours of the morning, someone helped him to drink a mug of coffee, but he was overlooked at wash-time. When dawn broke, the top blanket was frozen hard, and icicles hanging from the iron roof overhead began to drip. An orderly put a plate of chops on his locker and promised to come back and cut them up; they were still there when a bright little V.A. came along about an hour later. "Hello," she said, "a new patient. Hurry up and get better, Daddy wants you back in France."

"And who's 'Daddy'?" queried Ted.

"General Birdwood. Don't you know my daddy?"

"Know him! Yes, but he'll have to wait. I want someone to cut and hand me my breakfast. I want a wash. I want my dressing done. I want to see the matron, the head quack. I want to tell 'em what I think of this damn joint. I want to get out of it, not die in it. I want—" but Miss Birdwood had vanished to return with two hot chops and some comforting words and smiles. Good.

About midday the doctor came. Ted was moved into the ward, where his dressing was fixed. The doctor wanted to try and pull a piece of bone out of his arm, but Ted would not let him.

"I've got my instructions from Colonel Ryan. My wing's not to be touched until I get home."

"Very well, Muscles." Even the doctor had it.

"D'you call this a hospital? I've got a better fowl house at home."

His spirit evidently gave the impression that he was stronger than he actually was, for two days later he was granted leave to go to London. (At this time he had very little use of his left arm and the right hung stiff at the side. Furthermore, he had to be lifted on to his feet as he was unable by his own efforts to get off a bed.) While two of the boys dressed him lying on the bed, the inmates of the ward chaffed him about going to London.

"Where are you going, Muscles?"

"London. How do you get to Winchmore Hill?"

"Ask a john. Who are you going to see there?"

"A friend."

"What's her name?" "Where d'you meet her?"

"Want someone to give you a hand?" "Ha! ha! ha!"

"Ah, shut up, she's a friend I tell you."

"That all?" "Ha! ha! ha!" "He's goin' t' meet 'Arriet, 'ow abart a fevver fer yer 'at? Who'll lend 'im 'is spurs?"

And then an elderly Digger chipped in: "Don't tork ta me about English tarts, I got an eye-full of one comin' round a corner and saw 'er feet forty seconds before 'er body. I'm waiting till I get 'ome ta see the missus."

"Don't forget to buy some 'undreds and thousands for the kids!" "Ha! ha! ha!"

"All set, Muss. You look good-oh."

"Have one for me"—but Ted did not wait for any more.

The overcoat and boots, however, were too heavy for his weak frame. When he reached the gate of the hospital he was sagging at the knees and had to lean against a post, and when he got going again he fell over in the snow. Someone came and picked him up.

"Struth! It's Muscles. Where d'you get the booze? Cripes, you look crook. Where you going?"

"London, Winch—" Ted woke up in the ward, hot bottles at his feet and sides. A doctor and a sister were bending over him. "Feel all right now?" he was asked.

"Yes, good" but he was not so good, nor did he again get out of bed until two weeks later on board the hospital ship.

There is no record of his having composed a soldier's farewell to Harefield, but on 18 February he wrote, or rather "printed" in back-hand italics, the following letter:

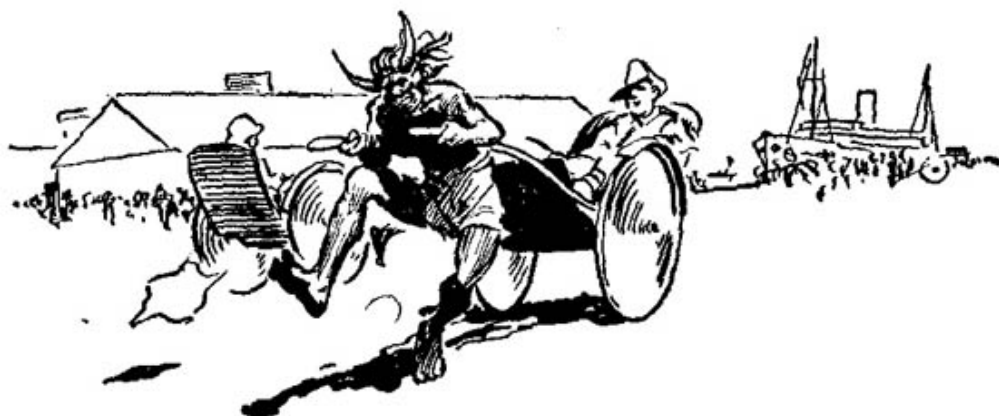
*No. 1 Ward,  
No. 1 A.A.H.,  
Harefield.  
18/2/'17.*

*MY DEAR MOTHER AND FATHER,*

*You will think I have forgotten you all at home, but you see I am laid up in bed again with a rotten cold. I have been here twelve days now and am waiting for the boat to leave for home. Mrs B. took me to her*

place for tea the Sunday before leaving Chatham, and my word I had a jolly good time. I have been very lucky with mail from home; received letters written just before Xmas a few days ago, also photos which I think are tip top. I am sending you a photo taken just after a fall of snow at the end of our ward. You will hardly recognize me, as I am so thin; but never mind, the grin is still there, and that is the main thing. Obtained leave to go and stay with Mrs C. at London for six days, only my cold was too bad and my fiver had sadly gone "mafeesh." Now I have a little job for each at home: First of all I would like Marion to learn a few tunes—"Pack Up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit-bag," and "Home in Tennessee"; Ned can clean out the top right-hand drawer of the dressing-table for my odds and ends; Col can hunt round and find my old tan boots, and Ruby can make up her mind which chair is the most comfy. Mother will make a nice hot scone and a cup of old Mossip's tea. Now as Dad is too old to work, he had better see that all these jobs are carried out O.K. The news has just come round that the boat leaves on Tuesday.

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## CHAPTER XIX. COMING HOME

Old soldiers never die—A sister and others—  
Miss Campbell, Durban, and a forged pass—  
An operation—Shipmates part—The sun sets.

(25 February—11 April 1917)

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*You forget your load of sorrow,  
Coming home...*

*It will wait until the morrow,  
Coming home...*

"Struth! This ain't the last carriage on the Rookwood express. Can't some of youse blokes talk?"

"Yes, it is not unlike a travelling morgue, ha! ha! ha! So the Rookwood worms will pick our bones after all."

"They won't get much off you, Muscles."

"Never mind, small fish are sweet. Have you ever heard that song, 'Cockles and Muscles, Alive, Alive-o'?"

"No, but I've heard 'Old Soldiers Never Die.'"

And then, with the exception of one, they (all cot cases) sang:

*Old soldiers never die,  
Never die, never die;  
Old soldiers never die,  
They simply fade away.*

"Hey you! wake up" yelled one of them to the non-singer, "and I'll intradooce y' to the corpses. I'm Andy, a spine; that's Jim, 'e's a spine, too, an' so's Arthur over there. They calls Muscles a spine 'cause that's all that's left of 'im; Tom, 'e's lorst a arm, a leg, an' a eye, so we calls 'im Lord Silver, bein' a cross between Lord Nelson and John Silver the bloke in *Treasure Island*. And now, what are you?"

"Me? I'm a nut."

"Blimey, you're stiff, where d'you do it?"

"Do it? Did nothin', remember nothin' till I wakes up in the gigglin' 'ouse and 'ere I am a nut case—quite 'armless—goin' 'ome."

The "nut" was promptly given the name of "Ed," intended as an abbreviation of "head." He accepted this as being derived from "lead" and said his second name was "Swinger." With a knowing twinkle in his eyes, he led the singing:

*I want to go home, I want to go home,  
I don't want to go to the trenches no more,  
Where the minnies and whizz-bangs, they whistle  
and roar—  
Take me over the sea, where the Allemand can't  
snipe at me;  
Oh! my, I don't want to die,  
I want to go home.*

And so, on 21 February 1917, the hospital train—comfortable, well appointed, and fully staffed—glided on over the rails with its complement of maimed yet happy Australians, all cheered up to be returning home. Within half an hour of leaving Harefield all were on as familiar terms as though they had left Australia together. Discussing their various ports of destination and indulging in some of the old interstate banter. The conversation then turned to speculating on the prospects of a good trip, the possibility of being hindered by German "tin fish," and (at great length) the likely quality of the food on board the hospital ship.

One Digger, who had been A.W.L. from Harefield for some time, gave a very illuminating account of his experiences and said that his wife, Mrs Sydney Harbour, would probably be following him out in the next boat. At this he turned a bit sentimental and said he was sorry he had given a crook name, because she was not a bad sort and perhaps he might do worse.

Early in the afternoon the train reached Avonmouth. The hospital ship had not arrived, and rumour had it that she had been torpedoed. Some hours later the train moved on to Bristol, where the patients were transferred to a hospital. After a long day without a midday meal, the disappointment of not embarking cast an air of gloom over the troops, but this was soon eased by the good folk of Bristol who turned out in force to meet the train and supply refreshments at the station. Early next morning they were taken back to the train, and given a rousing send off, and, on arrival at Avonmouth, embarked on H.M.A.H.S. *Karoola* without further delay.

The *Karoola*, one of the best known passenger-ships on the Australian coast, had been converted into a most modern and comfortable hospital ship. Painted white

above a red water-line, with a green band—broken by three red crosses on each side—running right round the centre of the hull from stem to stern; flying the Red Cross flag at the forward mast-head and the Blue Ensign aft; with her trim lines she made a delightful picture by day. Brightly illuminated with red crosses and green lights by night, she was a floating enchantment. The wards were well fitted up, with swinging cots to counteract the movement of the ship. The all-Australian staff, particularly the sisters, and even members of the crew, capably and cheerfully ministered to the well-being of the patients, who, in turn, reacted to the atmosphere and, despite physical suffering, enjoyed the trip.

The staff work connected with the embarkation of the invalids might have been arranged more efficiently. Instead of patients being detailed to wards according to the nature of their disabilities, they were accommodated indiscriminately, and the subsequent sorting out and transferring threw extra work on to the shoulders of the *Karoola's* medical personnel and caused patients some irritation.\* However, within twenty-four hours of sailing, everything had been straightened out and was working smoothly, and all the "has beens" were elated to be southward bound.

[\* It is quite likely, however, that submarine activity in the Channel delayed the arrival of the *Karoola* and necessitated a hurried departure, in which case the fault did not lie with the A.I.F. staff.]

Ted's day in the "steerage" ward, before being transferred to the more comfortable "dining saloon" ward, was not altogether an unfortunate experience, for it was in the steerage that he made the acquaintance of Sister D. Not that the staff of the new ward did not treat him well, in fact they, and in particular Sister S., spoiled him. But D., when off duty, would come under cover of darkness, after lights out, to give him cheer and comforts not prescribed by the M.O. nor allowed by the Matron. Being the most youthful patient on the ship had its compensations.

"She's forgotten you to-night, Muscles," someone would say.

"You're the snowy headed boy, all right."



"Change you beds, Muss."

"How d' y' do it?"

And so on they would chaff him until her white-clad form appeared coming down the dimly lit companionway.

"Here she comes, Muss."

"Give him a fair go" from someone in a loud whisper, and then complete silence.

A few minutes later the form of Thomas M., one of the ship's firemen, clad in dark flannel shirt, grimy trousers, and sweat-rag neckerchief, would appear and silently join D. at Ted's cot, with his nightly present of a bottle of English stout. Kneeling beside the low cot he would whisper his rough yet golden words of comfort while D. attended to the ministering of his gift to Ted. Immediately the bottle was empty Thomas would stow it and the glass inside his shirt, and with a cheery good-night leave them until the morrow. 'Tis not often the lot of man to know the love of mankind without others exhibiting jealousy and robbing it of its virtue. But here, as in England, Ted was fortunate, and even the other patients, some more badly disabled than himself, gave him freely of their cheer and consideration wherever possible. For example, there was Smithy, a half-caste, who had lost portion of each foot through "trench feet." He occupied the next cot and helped with his rough songs and rougher yarns to keep Ted cheered. During the visits of D., he invariably kept his back turned on the company and gave occasional reassuring snores.

As time went on Ted was able to get about a little and made the acquaintance of a grey-headed cot case who, when under the influence of morphia, played most delightfully on his cornet. At other times he was most despondent, but would always play something for Muscles, who visited him often. The poor old chap was one of six who died on the way home. He was buried at sea on the very day a mock burial had been arranged for Ted's bottle of ribs. His last request was for Muscles, and, although too ill to play the cornet, he yet found a smile when he heard of the arrangements made for the mock burial.

The arrival of the *Karoola* at Durban will ever remain fresh in the memory of those who saw and could read Miss Ethel Campbell's well semaphored messages of greeting, as she stood out on the end of the breakwater with her hair waving in the breeze. She and her band of willing helpers met every troop-laden ship which had the good fortune to call at Durban, and entertained most lavishly the khaki-clad travellers and homeward bound invalids. Having waved and signalled her greeting, Miss Campbell hurried to the wharf where, attended by a Kaffir servant, she threw fruit and cigarettes to the boys as the ship drew alongside.

Later, she distributed copies of her glowing tributes to the Anzacs:

### ANZACS

What mean these great white ships at sea, ploughing their  
eastward tack,  
Bearing their mangled human freight, bringing the spent men  
back?  
They mean that Australia has been there, they mean she has  
played the game,  
And her wonderful sons have won their share of everlasting  
fame.

Battered, and worn, and war scarred—those who had left  
their land  
Strong in their glowing manhood, by England to take their  
stand;  
Those who had sailed, when the war cloud burst, out on a  
distant foam  
To the tune of "Australia Will be There"—thus are they  
coming home.

What mean these absent numbers, the gaps in the stricken  
line?  
You will find the graves which tell you, on the trail by  
Lonesome Pine:  
On the slopes of Achi Baba, on Koja Chemen's brow,  
They died the death of heroes, as Australia's sons know how.

Eager for battle they leapt ashore at the cove where their  
name was won,  
They stormed the cliffs of Sari Bair, where the death trap  
gullies run;  
In the lead-rent scrub by Krithia, on the banks of Kereves  
Dere,  
High on the shell-swept ridges—Australia has been there!

There is silence on the beaches now, the battle-din has fled  
From the gullies, cliffs, and ridges where they charged up,  
fought and bled.

There's a little cove that's sacred—north of Gaba Tepe Hill—  
To the glory of the men who died, and a name that never will!

There are great white vessels sailing, and they bear the joy  
and pain,  
And the glory of Australia's sons who have not bled in vain;  
Tho' crippled, helpless, maimed for life, tho' more than death  
their loss,  
There is more than life in the glory of the burden of their  
cross.

Greater than jewel-decked Emperor, greater than ermined  
King,  
Clad in their faded suits of blue, the men that the white ships  
bring;  
What tho' their crown a bandage, stretcher or cot their  
throne,  
Splints or a crutch their sceptre—the Anzac name is their  
own!

When our wonderful tale of Empire, is written in far-off days,  
Not least from its glowing pages, a little name will blaze;  
A little name will echo in the paen of our fame,  
In the glory of our annals, there will live the Anzac name.

Patients well enough to go ashore were granted leave and issued with passes on which were stamped both the official oval insignia of the ship and either "walking patient," or "car patient" or "cot patient" as the case may be, and, written in ink, the name of the patient and number of his ward. Ted got a "cot patient" pass which meant that he was to take his leave on a stretcher, but an invalid artist who was selling hand painted and forged "walking patient" passes at five shillings each presented one to Ted.

Another chap arranged for a rickshaw to hurry himself and Ted away once they were free of the guard on the gangway, and they spent an enjoyable hour or two seeing the sights of Durban. The rickshaw boy, wearing a ferocious horned head-dress, turned out to be a master of his art. He would shy like a horse at a piece of flying paper and yell and run like Hell, sometimes not touching the ground for twenty yards or more as he balanced in the shafts going down hill.

Going by car in the company of two ladies of Miss Campbell's brigade, Ted and his mate and four other patients were entertained at lunch in a private home on the outskirts of the town, and, after enjoying a most happy afternoon, they were taken by Mr and Mrs F.C.S. of Johannesburg to the leading hotel for dinner. Without doubt this was the most sumptuous dinner any one of those six Diggers had ever attended. Unfortunately one of their number proceeded to make an exhibition of himself, much to the disgust and annoyance of the others. Calling the Kaffir waiters by Gyppo names, he ordered his requirements in that language and it was well that his hosts did not understand what he said. When someone tried to give him the office by gently kicking his wounded leg under the table, he offered to fight the whole "bleedin' lot of y's" when they returned to the ship. Having kept a course ahead of everyone he finished up with a soup spoon and finger bowl, and, after tasting a few spoonfuls of the water, said: "Struth! I don't go much on this stuff." He then proceeded to complain that all the pubs in Durban were shut up when Australians came there, but were left open to the New Zealanders. Mr and Mrs F.C.S., whose generous hospitality was not forgotten by the other five Diggers, sat through the dinner cheerfully.

On returning to the ship with a parcel of souvenir presents for the folk at home, one of the patients, Stan A., discovered that Ted was a present short and insisted on advancing him ten shillings to make the necessary purchase. The lender was disembarking at Melbourne but he did not mention this to Ted, and so the debt stood.

Two days were all too short to spend with Miss Campbell and her charming friends in their delightful city with its ocean beach, esplanade, rickshaws, and other interesting features.

The voyage so far had each day seen an improvement in Ted's condition, and the interlude at Durban put him on his feet. Had authority been content to let this state of convalescence continue, the patient would no doubt have been in a comparatively fit condition to face whatever surgical treatment was deemed necessary at the conclusion of the voyage. Authority, however, had other ideas and insisted on removing pieces of bone from the arm. Heedless of Ted's protest that Colonel Ryan and

others had advised that no further operation be performed upon him until arrival in Australia, the "sawbones" brought pressure to bear by threatening that a pension might not be granted if the operation were refused. There was no immediate necessity for the operation—the patient's condition was improving—and the shipboard facilities, no matter how good, could not equal those of a general hospital. Furthermore, owing to the patient's chest condition, there was a distinct danger of subsequent complications.

Many were the complaints of those who were practically shanghaied to the operating table. Ted was one of five who, on the morning of his operation, attended the orderly corporal's "boogie" parade. Something of a humorist, this N.C.O. called it the "physical works parade," and, lining up his victims, he proceeded, to carry out the manoeuvre in burlesque regimental style.

Ted's operation was not a success—it resulted in a bad haemorrhage, increased pain in the region of the wound, further loss of feeling in the hand, and his return to the D.I. list. Incidentally it was also responsible for the loss of a souvenir wristlet watch which disappeared from his person while he was under the anaesthetic.

Affixed to the bulkhead immediately in front of Ted's cot was a copper sterilizer. The "nut" case whose particular fancy it was to polish this every day for hours on end, and gape at his inane reflection therein, was even more irritating than the pain and illness following the operation. Still Ted might have found it worse had he been located in the ward where one of the "nuts" chanted the Lord's Prayer continuously for two days and three nights ere he died.

As soon as Ted felt able to stand the journey, he one evening prevailed on Fireman Thomas, though without the sanction of the M.O., whom he was determined to ignore—to carry him to the foc's'le where he enjoyed an extra bottle of stout and a few dips in the "black pan"—a tin sent to the foc's'le crew after the officers' mess and containing the assorted leavings of their menu. Thus, ere the ship reached Fremantle, Ted was again able to get about, though not with official consent.

Not more than a few hours were spent by the ship at the various ports of call in Australia. Those disembarking took what might have appeared to be casual leave of their shipmates, but the parting was in fact deeply felt by all. They did not make promises to write, but just flung a "Cheerio," "So long," or "Good luck" to one another or banteringly remarked: "Keep your legs together," "What do you think of our 'arbour?" "Don't get stuck in the Yarra," "See you at the next war." Ted's Durban creditor did not even bother to let anyone know he was leaving the ship at Melbourne—he just went.

Words, what words were there that could express the feelings and thoughts of these men? None. They were members of a freemasonry that had endured many partings—partings from loved ones at home, with old cobbles, with English and foreign brothers and sisters of the craft, with those "gone west." But their bonds of friendship, moulded in an atmosphere of mutual suffering, sympathy, and good fellowship, would endure. Words were unnecessary. Materially, they had parted—were parting; spiritually, they were together. Life would see many reunions, and in passing they would but part to meet again.

The evening of the last day found Ted alone on the boat-deck. He had gone there to see the sun set, and in the tranquillity of its fading light and changing hues his thoughts went fleeting over the days he had been absent from home. Lingered here and there to hold the happy memories; passing quickly over the sordidness, the horrors, the sufferings, and his own maimed state; yet ever mindful of those who, like the setting sun, had gone west, he felt not the glamour of heroics but rather the pathos of this eventide that signified the passing of so much—the venture, the great experience, had ended—the sun had set.

Contemplation of the future did not extend beyond the morrow. Would he be granted leave? No, he was marked down for transport by ambulance to Randwick Hospital. Still, he would have to work it somehow, if only for a few hours, so that the folk at home would feel less the shock of his condition. Would his mother and father reproach themselves for having allowed him to go away? Surely not, it was not their fault, they did not start the war—but, once

started, someone had to go. The fault—yes, there must be a fault—belonged to civilization generally. Did he himself regret having gone away? No, that would be tantamount to his repudiation of all the personal compensations and associations, but he did regret that civilization permitted war and so robbed itself of its best material—its youth.

But the morrow. Would they have a car to meet him? He hoped so. Would there be a lot of fuss? He hoped not, and prayed that his first day at least would be spent only with his own folk. There would be lots of time to see the others, and to listen to their foolish questions and be embarrassed by their hero worship. How disappointed some of them would be to hear that he had not killed a Fritz, yet how horrified if they learnt that he was credited with having dispatched a Gyppo. And there were other things that would horrify them. There was, thought Ted miserably, nothing to justify his appearing in the role of a soldier who had heroically served his country. Explanations would be futile—folks would not understand, but would put it down to his modesty! Yet, if it were possible to give adequate expression to his experiences and thoughts, he would, if believed, be branded a blackguard and a coward. Better then to say nothing. Let them think him a modest hero, let them continue to paint glamorous pictures of the war and their cause, at least until the rotten business was over—one way or the other; then, perhaps, the old soldiers of the world would join together in one great army to oppose tooth and nail those who upheld war as a means of settling international disputes. Yes, he would enlist in that "army" if it came into being, but, at present, his voice would only fall on unheeding, if not deaf, ears—if perchance they were noticed, he would probably be put away in some concentration camp or other for making seditious utterances. For the present, therefore, it were best, if unable to encourage enlistment, not to hinder it, so that the bitter end might come the sooner. And, for one who was of no further active use, well there was nothing left but to make the best of a bad lot, have a good time, try and find a place in civilian life, keep smiling and—forget.

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## CHAPTER XX. HOME AND HOSPITAL

The sun rises—The Heads and the Harbour—  
Mother!—The tumult and the shouting dies—  
Randwick Remnants—Ops and hops—An  
auction sale—A *Karoola* welcome—Discharge.

(12 April—12 October 1917)

Thursday, 12 April 1917, dawned as the *Karoola* approached Sydney Heads. Day and date in themselves were of little concern—what really mattered was that *the clay* had at last arrived. As the sun came up in all its glory and the mists of dawn lifted to reveal the gateway to home, all eyes strained to glimpse the landmarks that had faded from their vision, what seemed like ages ago. Middle Head: may its guns be heard only in practice and its scrub and gum-trees never be splintered and ravaged by enemy shells. Manly, Watson's Bay, Bradley's Head; sheltered coves and golden beaches; the ferries, their cock-a-doodle-doos; distant coo-ees...Home.

Military and medical officers boarded the ship at Watson's Bay and established themselves at a table on the promenade deck. As the troops filed past they were issued with leave passes according to the information they volunteered regarding their wounds and condition. Of course all vowed they were feeling fine; and Ted, like many others with open wounds, lied that his were completely healed. In point of fact, there was a hole right through his arm, but D. had filled his pocket with



dressings and his head with instructions for their application.

Coming up Woolloomooloo Bay one chap excitedly pointed out what he claimed to be his old home, a cave in the bank of the Domain; he supposed he would have to refurnish it, and anticipated some difficulty in getting hold of a good German piano case.

"Got your ribs packed?" someone asked Muscles.

"Yes! Why?" Ted replied.

"You know Adam gave one rib and got one wife. Don't know what you are going to do with seven. Thought you might lend me a couple."

As they were warped into No. 1 Wharf the Liverpool Military Band played "Home Sweet Home." On the wharf a general and his staff of "brass-hats" presented a stiff and formal welcome party, which was in marked contrast to the emotional throng that would have attended had red tape and war precautions regulations permitted. The band, now playing martial airs, rekindled some of the old fire; the troops, lining the railings, found voice to cheer again and again until the Red Cross motor cars came to transport them to where their loved ones were waiting.

What the official welcome on the wharf lacked in warmth was more than compensated for by the cheering crowds that lined the road leading to the Anzac Buffet in the Domain, and there, 'neath a canopy of evergreen trees pierced with bright shafts of streaming Aussie sunlight, a different welcome was enacted. Standing on tiptoe, their strained, eager and expectant faces all directed towards the incoming cars, were mothers, fathers, wives, sweethearts, sisters, brothers; some flushed with excitement, others white in dread—for the names of the cot cases had not yet been announced. As the men arrived their faces were closely scanned by the throng.

"There he is!"

"Bill!"

"Mother!"

"Oh!"

"Hurrah! Hurrah!"

A young mother is seen holding aloft a child, that it may see its father first and for the first time; and there, two V.As are supporting an aged woman in black who holds a tiny Union Jack in her trembling hand. "Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!" are heard the cheers from the roadway—still they come.

The first greeting is over. "The tumult and the shouting dies." Red Cross workers present each man with a box of comforts, V.As distribute refreshments, smokes, and flowers; newspaper reporters butt in everywhere.

The *Karoola*, looking rather weather-beaten, had her rails lined by the returned men, who cheered and cheered again as the band played patriotic airs. The majority of them were men who had fought in France, some of those who had taken part in the first big push. Nearly every case was a surgical one—that is, he had been wounded and was not returned through sickness. Though all looked bright and cheerful enough, it was easy to see that most of them had been through scenes and taken part in battles that would not bear talking of; in fact, it was a hard job to get any man to talk about himself; he would tell you what the next fellow had done, but when one asked for first-hand stories, a look would come into the eyes of the men that forbade further inquiries.

Such was the preamble of one report for the remainder of which the writer proceeded to draw on his imagination and on hearsay. "Boy Hero Comes Home," "Young Soldier Hero," "Boy Soldier's Silver Ribs" (but nothing about his tin —) were some of the headings to the wild fictions published by the Press.

A car took Ted to his home. But the house did not look the same—it was camouflaged with bunting, which was not at all to his liking. The whole population of the neighbourhood—including its dogs, which celebrated the occasion by having an all-in fight—was gathered at the gate. Other friends and relations, some of whom had not so much as bothered to write a few lines to their "hero," took up a grandstand position on the veranda. As the procession filed in, someone played "Here the Conquering Hero Comes," a dentist greeted Ted by examining his teeth and proclaiming for all to hear that he would do

them free of charge, someone began to cry. Dad and Ted thereupon adjourned to the woodshed for a yarn, and it was not until the early hours of the following morning that mother and son had an opportunity for quiet talk.

Their curiosity satisfied, their duty done, their emotions again normal, and having had their fill, the visitors departed—mostly for ever. A few, in addition to some who gave practical demonstration of their understanding by staying away that morning, are firm friends of Ted to-day. Some sent greetings, one sent a lounge chair, another offered the use of his seaside home whenever required. Such gifts were not expected, but were appreciated, not so much for their material value, but for the unostentatious and unpatronizing manner in which they were given. Friendships must stand the test of time—few did. Because Ted did not tell them all about the war; because he did not respond to their parrot-like speeches of welcome, except to say thanks; because he clearly demonstrated his desire to be alone with his home folk that day—most of them found him uninteresting and passed on.

On the following Saturday afternoon Ted was officially welcomed by the Mayor and other citizens, and in the evening he was tendered a party. But he found that, because of his inability to join in the dancing and games, he was left alone. The honoured guest of the evening? Bah! The excuse for the evening. But he continued to smile, for he thought of the old *estaminet*, and his old cobbers. Bah! These folk did not know how to stage a party. He sought out his Dad and went home.

And so, except for leaving the comforts and company of his home, he was glad when, a few days later, he moved to Randwick Hospital to rejoin those who knew him as Muscles and understood.

On the way to the hospital, Ted met an old cobbler. This chap had been admitted to the institution on the previous day, and his opinion was that it "is not a bad joint, fair amount of leave, tucker's not bad, sisters good-oh, there's a guard on the gate, but lower down you can get under the fence. Having a beano down the quarry to-night—come?"

Ted was admitted to one of the huts, to find that every one of the other patients was absent, with or without leave.

The orderly on duty inquired if Ted would be dining in and gave him the choice of several dishes, which were duly served up at 4 o'clock with much rattling of crockery and with complaints regarding the arduous nature of the orderlie's work. After this he took a stroll through the grounds, inspecting the hole under the fence and the location of the quarry, and visited the wards in the main building where the more serious cases were quartered. The *Karoola* cot cases in J ward gave him a welcome and introduced him to the sisters and other patients as "Muscles." One sister, dressing his arm, said he should not be in a convalescent ward, and took it upon herself to arrange for his transfer to hers a few days later. Evidently she also considered that he needed an escort, there being no other apparent reason for her acceptance of his oft-repeated invitations to accompany him on the evenings when he was given leave of absence.

But to return to the first evening. Ted found himself at the quarry with some twenty other *Karoola* boys, who had met to "spend the evening." He was just in time to hear Jawbone Joe address the gathering:

"Fellow stiffs and sadly spent six-bob-a-day tourists—"

*"Hurray!"*

"—we meet on this most un auspicious occasion to console with each other on having returned to civilization. Our trippings—"

*"Ah, shut up."*

*"Let him mag, he's practising for his old job with the thimble and pea."*

"—As I was about to say when you interrupted my eloquence—our trippings aboard palatial ocean liners, viewing delightful Egyptian wonders, dreaming 'neath romantic Eastern skies, revelling in frolics and follies in France, enjoying the restfulness and peace of Old England —"

*"Give 'im a drink, for Gawd's sake, afore 'e busts."*

"—and generally having a good time despite having to live with ignorant people who speak out of their turn—have

come to an end—"

*"Pity you didn't come to your end."*

*"He soon will if he keeps this up."*

"The first business of this meeting is to have another little drink. Pass the pinky. Now, all together—

*"Here's to good old beer, mop it down, mop it down,*

*Here's to good old beer, mop it down:*

*Here's to good old beer, it's all that's left to cheer,*

*Here's to good old beer, mop it down.*

"The next business on the agenda is confirmation of the minutes of our last meeting. The secretary reports having lost the records at the landing at Woolloomooloo. It is, therefore, unanimously carried that his action be endorsed, that we forget ever having had any past records —"

*"The police won't forget yours."*

"—and that we reconstitute ourselves a new body. While Fred—yes, it's Fred's turn—goes to get 'reinforcements,' we'll drink what's left and then proceed to adopt our constitution.

"The association formed under these rules shall be known as the 'Randwick Remnants.'

"The objects of the Remnants shall be:

"(a) To stimulate Australian interests and increase government revenue by

"(b) Enhancing the value of brewery shares and giving a fillip to the fish industry by

"(c) Eating crays, crabs, prawns, and other such salt fish at such times and in such quantities as may be sufficient but not more than necessary to produce a thirst equal to our liquid capacities or financial resources, whichever is the lesser—"

*"Whichever the lesser? Wait till I works it out—'struth, Joe, that's not necessary, or the fish. Why, there's not*

*enough dough in the world to satisfy our normal thirsts."*

"—Well, get on with it while I finish reading the rules. The slogan of the Remnants shall be: 'Eat more fish, drink more beer.' The passwords shall be: Inward, 'Gotabottle,' outward, 'Broke.' The terms of greeting shall be: 'Avadrink' and 'Avanother.'

"Before proceeding to general business—there's plenty left—let us extend a welcome to Muscles. He is fined one dozen beer and a half a dozen crays to be delivered on the ground of our next meeting here, for not having brought a contribution to-night. He is invested with the office of Chief Rabbit Runner, as it is his good fortune to be able to secrete a bottle in his chest without it being apparent to the guard. He is permitted to join with us in the toast to himself which will now take the form of general business."

*"Here's to good old beer, mop it down, mop it..."*

This party, like many similar ones, was attended by the individual not because he wanted a drink, but because, though unknowingly, he wanted to recapture some of the old care-free atmosphere and lightheartedness that prevailed on the other side. The Remnants, whether or not they subscribed in full to the details of their constitution as read, adopted the spirit and underlying principle (not mentioned in the constitution) which they carry on to this day. Comprising members of the professions, tradesmen, unskilled workers, unemployed, and some still in hospital, they have continued to hold "ordinary meetings" these seventeen years. Unwritten additions and amendments have been made to the original rules; the objects have been broadened and include help to the less fortunate; the password "Broke" and suspension for being so have been deleted. One member only wears the "badge" of membership which he attributes to indigestion, but at all meetings, so long as one financial member is present, "Avadrink" and "Avanother" remain the terms of greeting.

At this stage of the war (1917) returned soldiers, irrespective of their condition, were discharged from the army six months after the date of their arrival home. Hospital treatment was, if necessary, continued, in which case the only actual changes in a man's lot were the

differences between his former military pay (£2 2s. od. per week) and the full pension (30s.), the wearing of mufti instead of khaki, and, in case of death, the withdrawal of the privilege of a military funeral!

In the early months of a soldier's return the surgical, medical, nursing, and Red Cross treatment at Randwick was most liberal—that is to say, a sick man had little if any cause for complaint, and, once convalescent, he could proceed to make the best of the free leg he was given, although licence invariably resulted in a return to the sick list. Gradually, however, the application of firm yet sympathetic discipline, and the submission by the patient himself to the changing circumstances and necessities of life, led to a general sobering down and contraction of extremes, so that by the time the six months had elapsed the majority of the patients were more or less reconciled to their fate—repatriation and return to the conventional limits of civilian life. Not so, however, the chronic and more badly incapacitated cases, for whom the process of disciplining, treating and nursing, sobering and repatriating was to be a long, and in some cases life-long, task.

Numerous operations and lengthy confinements to bed gave Ted few opportunities for getting off the chain, and in any case he usually spent these brief intervals at home. Sometimes he would have a day out with the troops and on the morrow attend the orderly room to answer charges of being A.W.L., etc. On one occasion, at the request of the organizer of a certain patriotic fund, he was given special leave to appear with his souvenirs on the auction rostrum in Martin Place, Sydney. The souvenirs included his bottle of ribs, the time-fuse of the shell he had found in Egypt, a half-franc piece won at Boulogne for sucking a raw egg, and a few pieces of shrapnel. The auctioneer's assistant primed Ted and himself with a bottle of whisky, purchased out of the funds, and then led Ted to the slaughter.

"Ladies and gentlemen," the auctioneer commenced, "this is the World War's famous Muscles." (Much hand clapping and many hurrahs.) He then proceeded to tell his hearers how Muscles, "the youngest soldier on the Western Front," had done everything but win the V.C., and, with further exaggerations, went on to describe how

the youth had risen from the dead and survived unheard of sufferings and operations. "Here, ladies and gentlemen, are his ribs in a bottle." Many white faces and tear-filled eyes were to be seen in the audience, when someone suddenly called out, "Ow d' we know they ain't 'orses' ribs," and was promptly led away by a policeman. A lady fainted. The auctioneer proceeded: "And this, ladies and gentlemen" (holding up the time fuse) "is the top of the bomb that blew his ribs away. What am I offered? Five pounds. Thank you. Going at five—going—sixgoing at six, going at six—gone." The souvenirs were sold, passed back to the auctioneer, and resold until they realized some £50. Notes were stuffed into Ted's pockets, without any check being made, but he saw to it that all the money collected for the purpose was handed into the fund. It would, however, be interesting to know what proportion of the amounts collected for soldiers at such gatherings went into the pockets of some of the war-time spruiking opportunists.

The nearest Ted ever got to material contact with the past was when he stowed away in an ambulance going to meet the *Karoola* on her subsequent arrival from overseas. He was thus enabled to get on to the wharf, where he took up a position in front of the official party and extended a welcome to the sisters and other members of the staff and the crew. The kiss D. gave him as they met on the wharf was the signal for a burst of cheering from the troops lining the decks, and frowns from some of the brass-hats.

On 12 October 1917, Ted attended the Victoria Barracks to collect his honourable discharge. At the same time he was given an order for 30s. in lieu of a ready-made suit and cap, two returned soldiers' badges, and £22 13s. od. on account of final settlement, all this being noted on the parchment certificate of discharge. Walking across the parade ground his thoughts might have slipped back to the days when he had battled there with the old sergeant-major for the privilege of serving his country or satisfying his quest for adventure—which? Perhaps both, but it mattered not...he passed through the gates and out of the army for ever.





## CHAPTER XXI. WINGIES AND PEGGIES

Dope—A few of the boys—Some theatre parties—The new guard—To Melbourne and back to the dope.

(1917-1918)

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Leaving the army, however, did not mean good-bye to all that. It simply marked but another phase of war in which Ted carried on. During the next two years the habit—started some months prior to his discharge from the A.I.F.—of taking morphia, both medically prescribed and otherwise procured from dope agents, became a mania with him. The usual dose, one quarter-grain, gradually increased until he could take as much as ten grains at a time. Surgical treatment during this period was concerned mostly with the right arm; but adhesions as well as sharp spurs growing on the ends of several ribs, and the formation of nerve bulbs in the chest wound, were the more painful. So severe, in fact, was this condition that a deep breath or sudden movement, when he was not under the influence of morphia, would cause him to suffer unbearable pain. As his condition gradually became worse and daily administrations of morphia increased, Ted's resistance to pain and to drugs became less and less.

Except for the development of keen cunning in the art of procuring, secreting, and taking the dope, degeneration of his other faculties did not ensue. Conversely, as is the case with some subjects, morphia had the effect of stimulating mind and body to action, otherwise death or insanity must have resulted instead of the apparently impossible accomplishments of the time.

The military hospital was a good market for the war-profiteer whose nefarious business was the selling of drugs. Morphia, heroin, atropine, barbatone, cocaine "snow," and even opium, found their way into the hospital unsuspected, while the attention of the authorities was directed towards suppressing the lesser and only apparent evil—drink. A hollow bed-post, a cake of soap, and many other things provided suitable hiding-places, and a cunningly contrived fountain-pen, more than once lent to an unsuspecting sister to write her report or mark a chart, concealed a hypodermic syringe. Hypodermic administration has the surest and quickest effect, but countless injections leave tell-tale marks and are apt eventually to paralyse the punctured limb. It was the usual practice to take a maximum dose by this means and to prolong the effect by absorbing a number of tablets placed under the tongue. Harmless saline or sterilized water was sometimes ordered by a doctor for a patient suffering from the mental want of morphia rather than from physical pain, and, though in many cases this had the desired effect, it failed to act with the addict who realized the difference before or immediately after he felt the prick of the needle.

Drugs had to be bought. The maximum pension of those days, 30s. per week, was insufficient to provide these and other requirements for a man used to having all his wants satisfied. Art leather-work was taken up as a means of supplementing the pension. The manufacture of slippers, embossed hand-bags, writing cases, etc., had in Ted's case, to be entirely carried out with a single arm, and partially disabled at that, yet ingenious contrivances overcame the problems and at one stage his weekly income from this hospital occupation reached £20.

That this work was carried on to such advantage, despite the physical disabilities of the workers, is a tribute, firstly, to the members of the Red Cross who gave instruction in arts and crafts; and, secondly, to the sympathetic folk who purchased the wares. It might be said that full advantage was taken of the times, and high prices were charged accordingly. For example, from a sheepskin suede, costing from 5s. to 6s., could be made four or five pairs of moccasins which sold at 12s. 6d. per pair. The time taken to complete a pair was 45 minutes. (Jack B., or "Joe

Gardiner" as he was nicknamed, could cut out and make up a pair in 22 minutes.)

Some of the chaps were good at one or two operations of the work, but generally failed to produce a well finished article; e.g., one would be good at construction, another at cutting out, and another at embossing. Perceiving that a division of labour and co-operation would lead to better results, Ted formed a company—or, rather, employed his fellow-inmates on piece-work and commission—which gave increased earnings, a better article and all-round satisfaction.

All the money Ted derived from this occupation was not, however, used for purchasing dope. A definite weekly amount went to liquidate the obligations of a deceased cobbler; this was perhaps the only redeeming feature of the time, and provided Ted in later years with the satisfaction of knowing that he had at least done one thing worth while. The balance was spent freely, in between surgical operations, in having and giving a good time, with little or no thought of the morrow or the consequences. Most wounded Diggers passed through this reactionary period and had recourse to drink, which delayed the healing of wounds, but gave some respite to their war-tortured minds. The majority survived, some even returning to their pre-war standards; but, of the more seriously wounded, and particularly those addicted to drugs, many were taken in death or insanity before a few years had passed.

Among the Randwick Remnants there was Sandy, a spine case, and Johnny, with one leg amputated and the other gangrenous beyond possibility of amputation. Transferred to the Coast Hospital against their wish, on the morning after their arrival they asked to be lifted into their wheel-chairs which they propelled some seven miles to a well-known hotel at Paddington. After refreshing themselves to the limit of their financial resources, they pulled themselves out of their chairs and hired them to children for a penny a ride. When eventually found they were in a shocking state and had to be rushed off in an ambulance, to Randwick Hospital. Sandy led a wild and woolly life for many years, but in the end settled down quietly, and when last heard of was one of the few spine cases who, never able to walk from the day of his affliction, survived more

than ten years after the war. Johnny never used his wheel-chair again, but he rallied sufficiently to take up suede leatherwork, which he carried on to within a day of his death some few months later. "You know," he remarked on one occasion, "they reckon cotton-wool will kill you. Well, I've swallowed rolls and rolls of it, but it's no damn good."

Within a few hours of his death he said to Ted, who had gone across to him to borrow a leather punch: "Take the whole kit, Muss, I won't want it any more, I'm snuffing out to-day."

"You'll be all right, Johnny; buck up."

"Too true, here pull this cork," but he died before the flask of whisky was finished.

There were others. Sapper H., another spine case, the first totally incapacitated Digger to return from Gallipoli, who rebuked a certain A.M.C. colonel who addressed him by his surname. "Sir!" he said, "my rank was sapper, the equivalent of colonel in the A.M.C. In future, kindly address me by my rank." Sapper survived until about 1927, but not long enough to enjoy an outing in the car that was then being specially constructed to take his bed. A good fellow, Sapper—one of the quiet ones. Then there was Bluey R., a ginger-haired youth with a bullet embedded in the spine. He was one of the cheerful wonders who, despite his affliction and dropped feet, managed with the aid of surgical boots and two walking sticks to get about a little. The most striking characteristic of Blue was his smile and ready wit. "Do you know who I am?" said a well known visiting chattering comedienne. "Yes, Mrs Pankhurst," was Blue's ready reply, and the colonel had to turn his head to cough. When last heard of, Blue was about to undergo an operation to his tonsils; he and his smile are probably on deck to-day. A similar case, Tom D., one of the most respected and likeable of chaps, silently endured his troubles and gave wise council to his maimed fellow-men until he too was called west. Arthur C. and Paddy B., two other spine cases, early went the way of their cobbers, both stout fellows unto the end.

Jimmy K., another spine, blown up in France, had returned home and been discharged "fit," and had gone to

work in the bush until his trouble developed, thereafter living in a plaster jacket until he, too, crossed the divide in 1932. Another good fellow was Jim, S.P. by occupation and curried lobster and stout by inclination. Frank C., suffering the same disability—is he aboard to-day? What-o his motor cycle and side-car from which he drove more often than not, with a Digger cobbler sitting on the carrier. On one occasion he had a wonderful trip to the mountains—an orderly, invited to the party, that evening put a hot water-bottle minus its camisole at Frank's feet. In consequence the flesh was burnt off the heel of one foot, but Frank, who enjoyed every minute of his holiday, did not feel it. Another time his cycle struck a culvert and he was thrown over a fence into a garden where he lay laughing and unable to move, while the lady of the house abused him for breaking down her plants.

Of the other patients was Taffey O., who lost a trotter. While the leg was healing he attended a motor mechanics' school in the city. The first day he went to "work" the boys cut his lunch, sticking-plaster sandwiches and apples soaked in metho., and when he came "home" his bed was decorated like a motor car. However, he learnt to drive—a lift. Then there were Roasty and Mass, but they show up later, at Prince Alfred Hospital. Not so Bill E., who remained at Randwick, where the shell-hole in his hip was the subject of many performances at the theatre.

Bill E. and Muscles were under Sir Herbert —, whom they met almost weekly at the theatre. Sister E. liked to tell how Sir Herbert used to talk during the operation, when Muss was under the anaesthetic. "You poor little —, I'll fix you up, the German —s."

The day he operated on Bill with the aid of a local anaesthetic and spots of whisky (for Bill, of course) was the climax that brought his personal interest in Muscles to an end. Muscles was lying in the anaesthetizing room, but, getting tired of the hard slab, got up and peered through the unshut sliding doors leading into the theatre while Bill's turn was in progress. Sir Herbert called for a stool, but as he went to sit down the top came off and he sat on the cement floor. Calling the orderly all kinds of a blanky-blank-blank, he turned round to see who was laughing and spied Muss, whose head was almost through the

doors, laughing the more at the surgeon's masked and horn-rimmed spectacled face.

"What the Hell are you doing there?"

"Waiting my turn, sir. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Does not appear to be much wrong with you, you ——" but the orderly drew the doors together and Muscles got back on to the table.

Half an hour later Sir Herbert came into the room, dressed ready to leave.

"Sorry I can't do you to-day, lad," he said pinching Ted's cheek.

"That's no good to me, I've been prepared, it's not a fair go."

"Well! what are you going to do about it?" said Sir Herbert, looking down at Ted with a smile.

"How about your off-sider having a cut at it?" Sir Herbert's face changed. Ted realized that he had said the wrong thing, but it was too late to withdraw.

"Very well, F——," he said, addressing the doctor and giving some instruction in technical terms that may have meant "chop his head off" for all Ted knew. "Good afternoon."

Ted had little time to think further as Dr E. gave him closed ether, and this happened to be one of the few occasions on which he did not talk while going off. The operation was a success, and was the means of adding some more dead bone to the collection.

Two days later Ted got into trouble. With the exception of the sister in charge, all the nurses in his ward were angels. Patients unable to go to the recreation hall for morning tea were allowed to have it in the ward, but the orderly made the mistake of not asking the sister if Ted was one of these and brought him a mug of tea.

"Who told you he can have tea here?" she asked.

"He can't get up," the orderly started to explain. "I thought—"

"You're not here to think; take the tea away!" Then, to Ted, "What are you getting up for? I'll ring the doctor."

"Do. I'm going over to the shop to buy my damned tea," said Ted. He did so and, on his return, found the doctor awaiting him.

"What's this I hear?" demanded the M.O.

"What you see. I've been refused tea; if I'm not sick enough to have it in bed, I'm well enough to go and get it, that's me," was Ted's logic.

The sister explained that he could have had tea, but the orderly had no right to give it to a patient without first asking her permission. Just a detail—but most upsetting at the time. Some women should never have taken up nursing, yet in the experience of years this one was only the third who had behaved in this fashion. Another of this trio was a sister who threw a little dog over the balcony to the ground some twenty feet below. Her explanation of this act of cruelty, for it was nothing less, was that she thought it would "land on its feet like a cat!" The troops insisted on her being relieved—she was. As to all the others—well, they were wonderful.

"Shrapnel Kate," the night super., was probably the most talked of sister of the time. She knew every patient in the hospital, his medical history, his mode of spending leave, and the time as well as the manner in which he would return. It was said that she waited in a fig-tree to watch for the boys coming in after hours, but, whether this is true or not, the fact remains that she invariably arrived at a man's bedside within a minute or two of his return. Once Ted thought he had scored a victory over her, but he was sadly mistaken. After getting into bed fully dressed and turning on the snores, and having apparently satisfied her inspection under the rays of a torch, he was caught three minutes later getting undressed as she doubled back to make doubly sure. When a chap was really ill, he could not have wished for better and more devoted attention than she gave, but, immediately he was well enough to sit up and take notice, she dropped him like a hot brick.

Different sisters had different methods. Sister C., who has never been known to report a man for any delinquency, could get the Diggers to do anything she wished. Few will forget the "new guard" incident—when military policemen were substituted for a dinkum Digger guard. In the battle that ensued between the patients and the police, Sister C. entered the fray in the midst of flying bottles and swinging crutches, and with a word here and there, asking and not ordering, she succeeded in withdrawing her boys from the scene of action. The "jacks" fled in all directions, and were never again detailed to stand guard over the inmates of Randwick Hospital.

After this affair, however, the military police gave patients on leave little mercy. Returning to the hospital one night Ted saw a one-legged Digger with his back to the ramp at the Central Railway Station and two "jacks" asking to see his pass. He had one, but would not produce it, and when Ted butted into the argument a whistle brought four other "jacks" into the picture. Ted could give no more than moral support to the "peggy," who used his crutches to good effect until they were both arrested. The following morning they were brought before the colonel, on charges of resisting arrest and being A.W.L. Satisfied at seeing four out of the six policemen's heads bandaged, they pleaded guilty to the former charge.

"Do you mean to say it took six able men to arrest these cripples?" roared the colonel.

"Yes, but—"

"Never mind your buts, you should be damned well ashamed of yourselves. Next case, S.M., this one's dismissed."

At the time of the conscription campaigns, returned soldiers, many of them disabled, came in for much humiliating abuse from those who preferred to keep the home fires burning. That is probably why the patients at Randwick Hospital recorded a vote in favour of compulsory service. From the windows of the operation block one day, three civilians were seen to attack two Diggers—one a "wingy," the other a "peggy." In less time than it takes to tell, a number of pyjama-clad patients went to their rescue, and though they had little success,



the civilian police rounded up two of the assailants who received nothing more than a fine.

About this time, Bill E. and Muscles attended the operating theatre practically every Friday. For a day or two following an operation they would be kept in the ward and then take up veranda beds pending the next operation. One day, upon their return from the theatre, a new sister made the mistake' of putting them in adjoining beds, and both coming to at the same time they indulged in abuse of each other to the limits of their vocabularies. Bill was a bullock driver, so the sister fled. After throwing an iron chair at Muscles, Bill got out of bed, rolled up his mattress and bedding, and, wishing Muss a soldier's farewell, struggled out on his gammy leg to his veranda bed. Ted dressed and went home, but on the following morning he remembered nothing of the affair or even as to how he arrived there. The sister was of course blamed for this, so on the following Friday she took the precaution of tying them down in bed after their return from the theatre.

The following Sunday, two days after this operation, Ted was visited by his father, bringing news of the death in France of another cousin whose brother had been killed there three weeks previously. Not having forwarded a letter of condolence to his uncle in Victoria, on the former occasion, Ted felt that he could hardly write to him now. He turned the matter over in his mind and, after his father had gone, made his decision.

"Got any money, Bill?"

"Yes."

"Lend me a fiver?"

"Yes, what for?"

"I'm going to Melbourne."

The doctor was brought, and, when Ted had signed a statement to the effect that he was leaving at his own risk, the sister packed some dressings for him and away he went. In Melbourne he met and condoled with his uncle and other relatives, and returned to Randwick on the

following Wednesday in time to have a rest and prepare for yet another "hop-over" on the Friday.

Some weeks later at his own request Ted became an out-patient, and during the six weeks that followed he made his first effort to give up drugs and return to civilian life. Securing a messenger's job with a patriotic firm in the city, he was allowed time off to attend the hospital for dressings. When there were no messages to be run, he was sent to the "Soldiers' Welcome" hall at St Andrew's Cathedral, there to play billiards and otherwise enjoy himself until sent for. The job was a charitable one and, had his health improved, it might have been the means of saving him from the mania of taking drugs; but another operation becoming necessary, he had to return to hospital, and thence forward he gradually went down hill. Doing less and less leatherwork, playing poker and seldom bothering to take leave or to go to the many free entertainments and outings arranged for the patients, he became worse in mind and general health, until all interest in his fellows or his surroundings vanished. His visitors did not understand, and became fewer, but as he just wanted to be alone, he did not care, and so the time came when, with many other chronic patients, he was booked for transfer to the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.



## CHAPTER XXII. DOPE

Prince Alfred Hospital—Work and play—The Rev. Roasty—Now the bleedin' war is over—The strangling tentacles of morphia—The flame of youth.

(1918-1919)

A change from one place to another, whether welcome or not, was always marked by some form of hilarity. The move to the Prince Alfred was no exception. About one hundred cases were transferred thither and accommodated in three new wards—known as the Albert Pavilion. The usual motor-ambulance transport was provided, and the car in which Ted, four other sitting patients, and one cot case made the trip, conveniently broke down on the way. While the driver was effecting repairs, the troops sheltered in a corner house and, ere the ambulance was again in running order, the house might have been the old *estaminet* for all the Diggers cared of impending events. A merrier ambulance complement probably never drew up to the sombre portal of the Prince Alfred or any other hospital. Heralding their arrival with much singing, they were given a rousing welcome by their advance guard, which waved and shouted greetings from the numerous windows of the three floors overlooking the entrance drive. A cool reception by the hospital superintendent followed. The young nurses, who received them with awe, must have thought this consignment, at least, had been diverted from the Callan Park Mental Hospital.

The troops considered the civilian method of admission to hospital an unnecessary joke. Ted was ordered to bed—the nurse said he was very sick. He saw her write down pulse 140, temperature 103.2; the pulse may have been correct, but the temperature reading was doubtless increased when he dipped the thermometer into a mug of tea. The hospital's regulation pink-and-white check shirts were issued instead of pyjamas. The shirts were very short, designed possibly in the interests of economy or, more probably, with the idea of forcing patients to remain in bed. Complaints regarding the shirts, the smoking regulations, the cuisine, the students' desire to inspect patients, the all-important question of leave, and sundry other differences, from military hospital routine to which they had been used, would be considered in due course, but in the meantime they had to accept the conditions or get out.

At one end of Ward A2 a protest meeting was in progress, while at the other end two patients, clad in their issue shirts and standing on a bed, were doing their best to render a Punch and Judy show above the screen

surrounding it. Ted was contriving to remove his trousers under the bed clothes, there being no other screen available, when Ray P. enquired: "What's up, Muss? Don't go to bed, come over the road and I'll introduce you to Mrs—, who keeps the best beer in Sydney, drawn through glass tubes. Come on." But just then a doctor arrived to take down Ted's medical history, carry out a long examination, and order treatment and diet, and, before he had finished, Mrs—had closed down her establishment for the night.

Quite a number of the boys formed a great attachment for Mrs — and her daughter, both of whom took more than a business interest in their new-found clientele and would not allow its members to have one over the proverbial "eight." Though Mr — was not so popular—for he showed little inclination to learn the art of writing on a slate—he nevertheless had a few admirers who, clad in dressing gowns, were always there to wish him good morning when he opened his doors at 6 a.m.

But, to return to the hospital on admission day, the final scene of jollification was staged after the lights went out at 8 o'clock. The troops, clad only in their pink-and-white shirts—Long Mass, the leader, also wore huge cardboard spurs—formed into single file and moved off on a grand parade. At the head of the column was Roasty, carrying a portable gramophone, on which was being played a march record. The nurses laughed and squealed at the sight. Another act, a solo cancan by Roasty on the marble-top dressing table, was being well rendered when the night super. arrived, and the curtain was rung down to the music of the snoring chorus.

The troops, however, were not destined to have all their own way. They could not put it over the superintendent, who was a returned soldier; and the sister-in-charge, "Camperdown Lizz," had also seen service on the other side. A few unbridled cases were returned to Randwick on the following day; the remainder were told in no uncertain terms where they stood and where they got off, and as the novelty of the new regulations and surroundings wore off there was a general settling down to more moderate behaviour.

Like any other person in authority, the hospital superintendent was disliked. Had not these men voluntarily risked their lives for their country? Had not they experienced their fill of authority? Were they not now discharged from the army? Could they not do as they liked with what was left of their lives? Were they not promised that they would never want for anything? Granted, but they must learn that their return to the field of civilian life was not to be as green as they had visualized it from "over there." In fact, they would find that the thorns and nettles had increased during their absence. So there was much to be realized and endured. The rules and regulations of this institution had been drawn up over a number of years in the interests of suffering humanity. The war had not altered this, except to add one hundred of its sufferers to the care of the hospital—humanity would continue to suffer—the rules must go on. Whereas in the army an indiscretion could be expiated by red-ink entries in a man's pay-book, and he be free to carry on more or less as usual, the position was now reversed.

An offender here was not court-martialled or reprimanded, and financially reduced; he was merely shown to the door and given the freedom of the cold, cold world. Thus was the first lesson learnt at the P.A., and it must be admitted that the super. was both tolerant and just. He possibly made some mistakes. On the other hand, it may be argued that his actions were in the interests of his job or of the hospital; nevertheless the fact remains that his disciplinary measures were the foundation on which surgical, medical, and nursing treatment rebuilt these shattered minds and bodies, and in most cases their owners ultimately became useful members of society.

This happy state was not achieved overnight; in some cases it took years. Sympathy, though well meant and possibly deserved, on the part of certain doctors and, almost without exception, of the nursing staff, was one of the factors that tended to prolong the period of return to a normal frame of mind. Doctors and nurses shielded the men in many of their oversteppings, often at grave risk to their own professional interests and connection with the hospital. The case of X might be taken as an example. Very drunk, he decided forthwith to leave the hospital of his own accord instead of waiting to be thrown out on the morrow. Doctor and sister pleaded with him to stay.

Refusing to accept their assurance that they would not report his conduct, he was nevertheless persuaded to drink a draught before leaving. It was paraldehyde, and rendered him unconscious before he reached the door. They undressed and put him to bed. The only report against his name in the book was: Day report, "not complaining;" night report, "sleeping well." That act might have checked the downward path of some men, but in X's case it was not until he learnt the super's lesson that his mode of life changed for the better.

The treatment and appointments in the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital were second to none. The necessarily strict rules and the limited resources of such a large public institution were modified to suit the convenience of the soldier patients and, every reasonable concession and comfort were accorded them. The Red Cross Society established a depot from which it distributed many comforts, superintended hospital handicrafts, and supplied special foods for those more seriously ill. The Australian Jockey Club built and furnished a most comfortable recreation hall where concert parties frequently entertained the troops. Another innovation was the provision of a dining room and a card room in each ward, while the cleanliness and orderliness of the whole place were decided improvements on the makeshift conditions obtaining at Randwick.

It was a characteristic of the Digger that he quickly adapted himself to changed conditions and surroundings. On the morning following admission to the R.P.A., many of these men resumed their various hospital avocations. Leatherwork and basketwork were the principal trades; needlework held a few, and one man, who had undertaken to make his fiancée's trousseau, was already absorbed in the intricacies of some flimsy scalloped garment. Others made themselves useful at various ward duties, sweeping, dusting, polishing, washing up, attending the wants of bed patients, etc. Bed patients rolled bandages and made up various cotton-wool, lint, and gauze articles for the dressing bundles. To all intents and purposes, they might have been born in the institution.

The matron, however, found much to displease her when she did her rounds that morning. What annoyed her most of all was the state of Ted's locker, over the white enamel

surface of which he had spilt a bottle of red leather stain; and she looked furious when the chap in the next bed said, "That's nothing, Matron, you should see the locker Muscles left at Randwick, it was bloody awful."

While the recreation hall was in course of construction Roasty and Muscles formed a cricket club. The club had a very humble beginning but soon passed from the picket-off-the-fence-and-soft-ball stage to become a regular club with two teams and a first-grade kit of gear. At first there was some trouble with the groundsman of the University Oval on account of the players' wheel-chairs and crutches digging up the regular wicket, but he compromised by preparing another pitch and the games went on. Few of the boys proved to be all-rounders. Those on crutches could bat but were not of much use in the field. Titch made an excellent wicket-keeper in his wheel-chair until the misjudging of a swinging bat sent him back to bed. The champion bowler, Snow, whose left arm was held high in a shoulder splint, had a most deceptive action. Muscles went from first emergency to vice-captain in one stride, but the first stroke of the bat sent him a "sixer" and he woke up in bed. The cricket casualties continued to mount until the super. drew up another rule forbidding inmates to participate in active outdoor team games.

Boxing was the next form of recreation that was given a trial, but the knockout that Bill Bot. gave to Roasty caused the official seal of disapproval to be placed on it also. Roasty, of the stiff leg and disabled arm, thereafter directed his athletic inclinations to the iron bar overhanging his bed on which he performed all manner of hair-raising gymnastic feats.

One day Roasty, assisted by a Digger organist and another known as "The Urger," conducted a service in the hospital chapel. Quite a number of civilian patients were attracted by the singing, and The Urger rounded up a number of stray sheep. The congregation quickly divided into two, the civilian side singing "The Church's One Foundation" and the Digger side "We are a Rag-time Army" simultaneously to that well-known tune. The Rag-time Army won but there was no retreat for the Civvies, The Urger having posted a guard on the door. Roasty, with collar in reverse, eyes peering over spectacles, and hands piously clasped, looked quote the part as he announced:

"This being the first day of lent, seven days following the last day of manna, and seven days prior to the next, for the day of pension falleth only every fourteenth day, I find that I and my flock hath sadly strayed on to the rocks where manna falleth not and all that was has been lent and borrowed among us until there remaineth nothing. Blessed is he who hath given all he had for he shalt not be robbed. Ye who are of my flock are very fortunate. Ye who are not of my flock shall be equally fortunate, for verily I say unto you that you shall be fleeced forthwith. Wowser Wingy shall now take up the collection. Cast freely of your deeners, zacs, trays, and coppers into his hat, for he hath but one arm and shall accounteth to me for every penny. He who heedeth not shall be in danger of having his pocket picked. The flock shall now sing:

*"We lost disasters in Egypt,  
In France we lost by the score;  
Bradburys in Blighty left us,  
And army pay's no more.  
We have to make this collection,  
It's your turn for sacrifice;  
Cough up your oscar,  
We'll call you a boscar,  
For that is our price."*

Later Roasty continued:—

"The proceeds of the collection, two shillings and four pence, ain't 'arf enough to 'elp us to 'otel 'ospitality, so I place it in this mission box for the 'eartless, 'elpless, 'opeless 'eathens. One verse of the old words and three of the new shall now conclude the service:

*When this bleedin' war is over,  
Oh, how happy I shall be;  
When I get my civvie clothes on,  
No more soldiering for me.*

*Now the bleedin' war is over,  
Oh, how happy was I there;  
Now old Fritz and I have parted,  
Life's one everlasting care.*

*No more estaminets to sing in,  
No ma'moiselles to make me gay;*



*Civvie life's a bleedin' failure,  
I was happy yesterday.*

*Now I've got my civvie clothes on,  
Oh, how happy I shall be;  
When I get my devil's tail on,  
No more civvie life for me.  
Only one more operation,  
Only one more pension day;  
Ere I hop across the sand-bags,  
Where old soldiers fade away.*

*When in Hell I join my cobbers,  
Oh, how happy I shall be;  
Heaping coals upon the blighters  
Who have dished it out to me.  
Feeding brimstone to the Kaiser,  
Oh, how happy I shall be;  
When the War Lords get their issue,  
No more hell on earth for me."*

Time went on. Patients were patched up, discharged, re-admitted, patched up, and discharged again. Old wounds had a nasty habit of breaking down. One never felt that a cobbler receiving his discharge was going for good; he was expected back some day, unless of course he went via the morgue.

The send off arranged in honour of Ray P.'s departure could not be held in a hotel, on account of the restrictions introduced during the influenza epidemic. In the end the function took place in the superintendent's garage at the rear of the hospital, and was a complete success. The car was wheeled out into the rain, and as the evening progressed the songs and laughter increased in volume until close on midnight, when the words of "Auld Lang Syne," perhaps uttered a little thickly, were audible to the cot cases half a mile away.

All departures were not happy ones. For example, there was the case of Y—, who drank a bottle of methylated spirit, cut his throat and an artery in his arm, and jumped out the window to the ground fifty feet below. The severed artery proved fatal. There were other distressing and tragic cases, yet amidst all the horror and suffering the

cheerful spirit of the Digger prevailed and usually won out.

Two years after discharge from the army found Ted still in Prince Alfred Hospital. He had become a slave to the drug habit. It is true that during the last few months he had, in between operations, been able to do a little leatherwork and take part in some of the jollifications. But his retirement from the cricket club marked the end of his active interest in anything but drugs. So severe was pain he had to bear and so accustomed was he to drugs that ten grains of morphia, forty times the usual dose, failed to have the desired effect. Because the medical treatment included morphia, his own secret taking of it had, as yet, not been found out. It was not until some weeks after his 48th operation that he was discovered to be an almost hopeless victim.

This operation—for the removal of sharp spurs of bone which had grown from the ends of the fractured ribs, and of a large growth of nerves—was a success, but the severe haemorrhage and reaction that followed almost proved fatal. It was only the untiring care and skilful attention of the doctors and nursing staff, and the personal rather than the professional interest of Dr H., that made it possible for Ted to fight for life in the weeks following the operation and to survive.

Dr H. was not his doctor. Her day duties were in another department of the hospital, but at any time of the night that he wanted her she would come. More than once she watched over him the whole night through. It was her devotion and understanding, her words of warning against drugs, and her appeals to his better instincts that eventually penetrated his drugged and pain-warped mind and made him resolve to live. He would cast off the strangling tentacles of that vile clinging monster which had all but sapped him morally and had left him void of anything else in life other than to sleep and dream, crave and rave, and sleep again.

She set him a task—how difficult only the hell of its accomplishment, how great only absolute victory, would know. He had received his last injection of morphia, had heard her parting message—"One should not be proud of never falling, but be proud to fall and rise again"—and had

promised to climb, when the superintendent, as though overhearing everything, appeared at the foot of the bed.

"I know your complaint," he said. "You are a drug addict."

"Yes."

"Do you want to get better?"

"Yes."

"Very well, I'll see you in the morning."

Complete isolation from the military wards was the first thing the super. prescribed. But Ted refused to leave the company of the troops. Accepting the super's alternative, he left the hospital a trembling wreck, craving for dope yet resolved to fight and resist it—on his own. He collapsed at the gate, and a lady doctor and Roasty half-carried him back to the ward. The superintendent would not relent to the pleadings of other doctors and sisters—Ted had either to accept his treatment or get out. Exhausted, broken, and feeling the weight of degradation heavily upon him, the youth was taken to his isolation where only the superintendent and a special nurse were allowed to attend him.

Isolation, however, did not prevent him from securing drugs. The cunning of a dope fiend is almost impossible to combat. He completely loses sight of the fact that something is being done for his own good, feeling instead that the whole world is contriving to torture him. And so he plans for future supplies and will do anything to secure delivery, all the devils ever named prompting him to gain his objective. Even if he harbours any thought of wanting to be cured, he craves possession of the drug just the same, deceiving himself into the belief that he will not take any. He just wants it—just in case—and once procured he schemes first to secrete it, and then to avoid observation of his taking it. In fact he almost brings himself to believe that he is not taking it, or, at least, is weaning himself so long as he avoids discovery, but all the time he is going from bad to worse, his mind being unable to cope with the situation.

Even close scrutiny of his mail, parcels, and laundry failed to prevent Ted from securing a large consignment. Both

the nurse and he received a box of chocolates, apparently identical—Ted's contained the dope. That night he experienced, perhaps the worst horror of his life. He would just have one, only one little tablet, a quarter grain, that could not hurt, it would help a little, just one but no more. Oh no! he would never want it again, only this once and then he would be all right. It would give him sleep, rest, and strength. Strength? Strength of what? No, he was strong enough to chuck the vile stuff away, but no, not now—to-morrow. One, just one. No, he would take two, for the pain was very bad; all the pains he had ever suffered were racking his body, and no man could stand such pain. H. would forgive him this once. She would not know; perhaps she had forgotten him, but perhaps not—had she not that day sent him a book, *Myths of Greece and Rome*? Fancy reading a book! Would he ever be able to do that again? Just one tablet and he would be able to read. But would he? No, he would be thinking of his deception. Oh God! what had he done to deserve this hell? He would end it all—forever—he would go now—but why not one or two? It would make it easier, ah! He would take an overdose. Again he fondled the box, his chin sagged and trembled, his hand clutched at his parched throat, his eyes stared into nothingness—the nothingness of beyond—faces of those who had gone before, faces of those living whose lives had been much to him, passed before his vision...A gleam of light! What was that? Thee night sister coming on her rounds. She must not see the box—she did not, but was quick to notice his distress.

"Why, Muscles, you are not about to-night?" (He did not sleep at night—just walked up and down the space of veranda allotted for his isolation.) "And you have not slept to-day. You refused your treatment and food, just when you were getting on so well. Come, there's a good chappie, take this bromide and tablets, and lie down for a little while. You may sleep. I'll come back."

She went on her rounds. Ted took the tablets from under his tongue, crushed them underfoot, and spat out in disgust. Why, she was treating him like a child. He would show her, he would show them all what he was. He would get rid of the dope for a start. Yes, he would put it down the surgical sink at the end of the veranda. He went there, failed once more—passed through it all again...and so on through the night.

It was not until the grey dawn that in one great effort he brought himself, with all the strength that his weakened body and mind could muster, to carry out his resolve. As the drugs disappeared down the sink the reaction of the night overtook him, and there he was found in an unconscious heap. But he had won his first great fight.

There were other tussles—the following night was almost as bad—and it was six months before Ted could lie down at night without feeling the craving for morphia. The ascent was long and perilous. To slip the least little bit or relax for a moment meant falling headlong into the depths again. Gradually the way cleared, and gradually he was given more latitude. At night time he would occupy himself by helping in the ward, where much assistance was needed. The 'flu epidemic was taking its toll at an increasing rate, and the hospital staff was almost worn out. Ted turned his hospital experience to practical use, and was able to lend a hand at anything from carrying a bottle to laying out a corpse. The night he assisted the wardsman to transfer three bodies to the morgue, prompted him to volunteer officially for 'flu work on the morrow. But the super. would not hear of it.

"If you get the 'flu, you will go out like that," he said, snapping his fingers. "Once I thought you better dead, but now you have broken yourself of the drug habit I am going to allow you to go home. Mind now, it will be a long time before you lose your craving altogether. Stick to it, son, the worst is over. I congratulate you and am more proud than I can say. Put it here."

That little speech and shake of the hand had been worth fighting for.

And so Ted, yet a boy of but twenty summers went home. Despite the years of suffering and the hell through which he had passed, the flame of youth that had so many times almost burnt out was still there—a little dull, and flickering somewhat—but there nevertheless. Within a few weeks it had kindled the fire of ambition, and in the bright glow that radiated from the flames he pictured the future—successful occupation, a home of his own...There was much to live and strive for, life was sweet. He planned and set to work accordingly.



## CHAPTER XXIII. CARRYING ON

Leatherwork, study, bees, and fowls—Beer and dynamite—Amputation—A presentation to the Prince of Wales—From the 50th operation to a regular job—The 51st and back to Hell—Convalescing and organizing—Company promoters, gramophones, and fowls—A "Domestic" op.—Accountancy, and a lesson in politics—A holiday by the sea—With the Randwick Remnants, 1932—Anzac Day, 1935—The Battalion reunion.

(1919-1935)

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The change over from the soldiering to the civilian order was not just a matter of getting out of a uniform and selecting a dress to suit one's individual fancy—it was not as simple as that. Even those who were fortunate enough to return whole in body found it more difficult to establish themselves in peace than it had been to find their place in war. Mostly young men, their lives had been moulded, cast, and set to the standardized pattern required by the immense and heartless machinery of war. Their lives had now to be thrown into the melting pot. The very substance of their being had to undergo a complete change if they were to fit into the subtle ramifications of "Peace on earth, good will toward men." The outlook on life and the values

had to be recast. Individual responsibility to one's self had to take the place of submission to authority. Necessity became the order of the day.

Those who had suffered loss of physical fitness found it even more difficult to readapt themselves. The labourer who had lost a leg or an arm could not now take up a profession; the professional man or student who had suffered shell-shock must find it difficult to adapt himself to some menial occupation, and so on. The Repatriation Department did much to train and place disabled soldiers in work, but, generally speaking, the problem was one for the individual himself to solve.

For Ted, art leatherwork, a correspondence course in book-keeping and business training, a few pens of poultry, and many hives of bees served to occupy him, and within a few months the craving for drugs was a thing of the past.

The open wound in his stiff and useless right arm continued to cause trouble, while the wounds of the mind occasioned periods of restlessness and remorse. But a day out with a few old cobbers, some beer, singing old songs, reviewing the more pleasant of old memories, and perhaps finishing up in an argument with the proprietor of some foreign fish-shop, afforded an opportunity for letting off steam. There had to be some safety-valve for his pent-up feelings. Dynamiting fish for the edification of old school pals, a trip to Victoria with some schoolboy footballers, and a holiday in the Newcastle district with cobbers of the old battalion, were other diversions which helped him along the way.

With the establishment of a studio in George street, came two first prizes for art leatherwork in the Adelaide Peace Exhibition, an order for diary covers from Lady Birdwood, and two orders for presentation writing-cases for the Prince of Wales. While he was engaged on the orders for the Prince the condition of the arm became so seriously affected that it had to be amputated. This operation, the 49th, was borne without recourse to morphia, and on Sunday, 20 June 1920, his twenty-first birthday, Ted was taken from Prince Alfred Hospital to Randwick to make the presentation on behalf of the Red Cross to the Prince.

Shortly afterwards another operation was performed for the removal of nerve bulbs, and towards the end of 1920 Ted became a clerk in a manufacturing company. Optimistically believing himself to be established in civilian life and feeling that the future was assured, he married. But within five years, after progressing through the general accounting department to the post of employment manager, the necessity arose for another operation, and subsequent ill-health forced him to relinquish this employment.

Although he prayed that morphia be not given him, his condition following this operation was such that injection of the drug became absolutely necessary, and again he went through the hell of 1919. Diagnosed as a hopeless drug addict, it was his good fortune to have a few believing friends, and Dr C., the former superintendent, again came to his aid. The evil thing was again conquered and the fight for a place in the sun once more taken up.

For some time previous to this operation, Ted had been actively engaged in organizing returned soldiers' clubs and associations, and he was directly responsible for placing hundreds of returned men in employment. Continuation of this work in the interest of his fellow Diggers kept him fully occupied until, with a return to better health, he decided to make another attempt to establish himself in business.

The first venture, in partnership with his old cobber Rex, did not develop according to the prospectus drawn up by the go-getting company promoters from whom they purchased shares and acquired certain rights; but a sideline, manufacturing and retailing gramophones, offset some of the losses. Casual employment with Rex in his estate agency business and attending to the incubators, brooders, and pens of their "model breeding" poultry farm, served to pass the time until in 1928 he entered the Royal North Shore Hospital for his 52nd operation, a "domestic" one this time, not due to war service.

At the North Shore Hospital the doctor, a Digger, got writer's cramp after wading about half-way through Ted's medical history, and suggested an adjournment to the bathroom, where they might indulge in a smoke and finish off the job in reasonable comfort. When he had



written the last word and noted the request "no morphia," the doctor asked: "What have you come here for?"

"Appendix," replied Ted.

"Yes, I know that, but you've had some of the best doctors in the world on your case, and now you come here to let the mugs have a cut at you. No, not exactly mugs, but by comparison—well, you know. Hugh P. or Professor S. would only be too glad to fix you up. Think it over. I'll see you in the morning."

"Oh, by the way, Doc., I've got piles. Could you fix that up, too, under the same anaesthetic?"

An accountancy practice was Ted's next venture, which reached the stage when he considered it sufficiently established and remunerative to justify his purchasing a car. As a side-line he founded an art woodworking business. Not long afterwards, however, the financial depression threw spanners into the works and he sold out.

When, in the ensuing upheaval, it became the fashion to join some political organization or other, he threw the whole of his energy into a brand new one that had as its object the saving of Australia from the evils of party politics. Within a few months the membership of this organization went to over 100,000, and during the same period Ted rose from the position of district committeeman to that of State Councillor and executive officer.

But a year's experience in the political arena was sufficient to convince Ted that in the peace-time ways of men he had much to learn, so he resigned from his party and thereupon spent a holiday at the Limbless Soldiers' Aquatic Club.

The Limbless Soldiers' Aquatic Club—which provides comfort, accommodation, and recreational facilities, such as a swimming bath, a bowling green, billiards, and boating—is an example of the enterprise of the Limbless Soldiers' Association of New South Wales, which has received much public support.

The club's rowing boat with outboard motor was perhaps the feature that appealed mostly to Ted. In it he had a few exciting experiences. One calm day, with a lady passenger aboard, he made a trip to Manly, followed by a run outside Sydney Heads; on the return journey they had to face a southerly, and, besides getting a ducking themselves, the motor threatened to "conk out" each time it was drenched by a wave.

Then there was the night, when alone and without a light, he was faced with the problem of replenishing the petrol tank and getting out of the way of an approaching ferry. Could he do it in time? Would the ferry skipper see the light of a match? Would the match ignite the petrol? The skipper would see that all right and perhaps fish him out of the "drink" before the sharks recovered from their fright. As these thoughts flashed through his mind, the ferry passed within a few feet, and its wash unexpectedly rocked Ted out of the boat!

Another day he went on a fishing excursion to South Head with Fred T. (minus two legs and an arm), and his four-year-old son. Measured in terms of fish caught, the day was not very successful, but they thoroughly enjoyed themselves until the engine broke down and they had to row all the way home. It is possible that this outing contributed to the illness that brought Ted back to Randwick Hospital, but, in any case, the operation then performed would have been necessary sooner or later.

Ted found the Repatriation Hospital—or, as it has been called these many years, Prince of Wales Hospital—at Randwick to be a greatly changed institution from that which he had known in 1917. All patients were now accommodated in the huts, the main buildings having been condemned as unsuitable for a hospital. The administration of the institution was greatly improved. In 1917 waste had been evident on every hand, whereas in 1932 economy was rigidly enforced without the sacrifice of absolute essentials. The surgical and medical treatment was still in the hands of the leading surgeons and physicians, and ex-A.I.F. sisters were carrying on the good work they had taken up years before. From the view point of efficiency, neither the taxpayer nor the Digger patient has any cause for complaint, yet something just a little

more than efficient treatment could be given the Digger inmate in the eventide of his life.

But when, for example, a patient is accorded medical treatment for a war disability to one eye, and refused treatment of the other because he cannot prove that its condition is due to war service, there seems little chance of small luxuries being granted. A recent regulation that "woollen stump socks will only be replaced subject to fair wear and tear on the production of worn-out or otherwise unserviceable ones," is another illustration of the Repatriation Department's zeal for economy. If the person responsible for framing this regulation had to wear an artificial leg, he would soon learn that new socks chafe and are requisitioned only when the old ones are completely worn out.

However, even while the Digger growls outwardly, he to-day inwardly accepts the inevitable philosophically. A kindly word from his doctor, a smile from the sister as she tends his needs, a yarn with a cobbler, and a joke with the wardsmaid mean more to him than anything the taxpayer can provide. W. S. Friend and Company's concert party, some school teachers, and a few other unforgetting folk who have never needed the glamour of war or possible social achievement to spur them on, regularly attend the Repatriation and Red Cross hospitals to entertain and provide party suppers. Unit and other Digger organizations also contribute something to their less fortunate cobblers, and so the 1500 odd inmates of these institutions are not altogether forgotten.

"I hope they've r-r-read that b-book, *Br-bring 'em B-b-back Alive*," said Peter E. as they wheeled him to the theatre for what everyone thought would be a hopeless operation. Peter had an impediment in his speech, but the loss of half his innards and the knowledge that the gas was eating him away did not interfere with his sense of humour or with his cheerful ministrations to his cobblers when he was able to get about. Whatever inconveniences the loss of a leg or arm occasion, they are limited and, being apparent, bring certain compensations. But for the soldier whose scars are not visible to the naked eye and for the man who is experiencing that lingering and painful death from gas—and Peter was one of its victims—there are no compensations.

An account of the six months Ted spent in hospital in 1932 would be practically a reiteration of the suffering, the humour, the—well, everything else that he had previously experienced. Again he was fortunate to receive not only the best possible medical, surgical, and nursing treatment, but also the sympathetic understanding and tolerance that, most of all, those war doctors, sisters, and fellow patients can give. Like many other patients who had the good fortune to meet Peter, Ted cannot think of the individuals to whom he owes so much without seeing Peter and the gold-filled tooth that went with his ever-ready smile—the smile that covered up so much of his own suffering and encouraged others to think less of, if not to forget, theirs. Whether he twisted his old frame on the night he jumped out of bed to rush across to Ted, whom he thought was in the throes of a death seizure, is not known, but for the pains he suffered he blamed his fit of laughter on discovering that the "seizure" came from one of two cats under Ted's bed.

Ted was screened off from the rest of the ward. For weeks a member of his family was present by his bedside day and night, it being expected that one of the many seizures that he had would send him out of the hospital feet first. Regaining consciousness after one of these turns and seeing the worried and anxious face of his father, he remarked: "Why look so miserable, Dad? This is not a funeral. Norm H. is much worse than I; what won the last?"

Once able to get his feet to the floor, Ted asked for his discharge, but this was only granted after a "nut" specialist had declared him to be possessed of his mental faculties. The specialist was probably right, for within a few weeks of his leaving the hospital Ted again took up duty with a returned soldiers' organization, his job being to find employment for its members and attend to the accounting of its funds.

It was not until June 1934 that Ted gained admission to an accountancy institute. The feeling of satisfaction that came with this achievement compensated for the years of broken study and overshadowed the realization that application of his qualifications was limited to his physical capacity and the degree of consideration that might be accorded him by client or employer. But, so long as the

provisions of the Repatriation Act afford him his pension with the right to earn a "negligible percentage of a living wage," he will have little cause to worry over the basic material requirements of his family and self. While there are returned soldiers' organizations to be served, and while his one lung is able to provide the energy of life, his left arm is not idle for want of something useful to do.

And now, as secretary to his battalion association—the oldest being the president, Colonel Tod S., who, when adjutant, put Ted on his horse on the march to Estaires—we leave him with the veterans.

It is Anzac Eve, 1935.

Colonel Fred S. has arrived from Newcastle. He and Ted are standing at the bar of the "billet" surveying the rations that have been provided for the boys who are to arrive by special troop-trains about 11 p.m.

"We shall have to do better than that, Ted," suggests the Colonel, to whom hot pies, sandwiches, and pickled onions are not in keeping with the occasion.

"Pity the old *Beltana's* not in port," observes Ted, "a dish of those stewed apples would recall old times."

But the Colonel has other ideas and off again he goes, to return with boxes of richly iced cakes.

"That's the stuff to give 'em," Ted encourages, and they proceed to review the arrangements for the following day...

Of a sudden there's a bang!

"Here they are!"

"Ah there, Geoff!"

"Struth! There's Fred!"

"Hello, Wes! You old cow."

"Blimey! If it ain't the old ——"

"Haven't seen you for seventeen years. Put it there."

"Cripes! You're goin' bald. Put yer hat on so we'll know yer."

"How's things, Ted?"

"Never seen the country better."

"What'll you have?"

"Mine's a pint."

"Look at old Bill on the sarsaparilla."

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"The more we are together," someone strikes up and they all join in.

"Know that bloke over there, Ted?"

"Know him! Why, it's the old Eric."

But Eric can't place him, not for the moment, then he eagerly ventures: "It's not you, Ted? God! to think we should meet again. Last time I saw you—about nineteen years ago—lying out on top, coughing blood. How the hell did you get here?"

"Don't wake it up, Eric; only the good die young. How're your old pins? What sort of a time did you have in Germany? Cripes! I've written every bank in the State trying to find you."

"Oh! I've chucked the bank. Am doing commercial art now. Come on, have a spot."

"Remember the railway embankment at Tel-el-Kebir? You know, where we used to have bread and raspberry jam and—"

"Do I what? And beer. And what-o the night at Fleurbaix on the old plonk and Nelson's blood?" "Why yes! It all seems like yesterday."

And thus was spent the last hour of the eve of Anzac Day, 1935.

"Who's making the most noise here?" inquired a police inspector who, with his sergeant, entered the bar at 2 a.m.

"Reckon it's me," said Ted.

"Well in that case we'll have a drink. Don't mind you all having a good time, but the folk on the other side of the harbour are complaining of the noise."

Then came the Dawn Service.

Out of the light mist—a mist that promised the dawn of a great day—they came; treading with what seemed muffled feet. Silently they gripped the hands of old cobblers. And youth, who knew not war, joined with the veterans in the hushed silence before dawn. Facing the flower-strewn Cenotaph, they stood silently and steadily until the first blast of "Reveille." They were all there—fallen comrades, veterans and youths. It was one great reunion—a reunion of souls.

"Show a leg! Show a leg! Come on, Ted, you'll be late for parade," and while Ted shaved, Colonel Fred S. attended to the lacing of his shoes.

"This'll do me," said Ted. "Fancy having a full-blown colonel for a batman!"

Then Colonel Tod S. arrived with great bunches of purple and gold flowers to decorate the luncheon tables in the colours of the old battalion. Eight o'clock saw the early birds on parade, and by ten they were all present. And how did they meet and greet?

"Here comes Whippy."

"Who pinched the duck?"

"All the birds of the air fell a-sighing and a-sobbing, when they heard of the death of poor Cock Robin...," broke forth the song of greeting,, as Colonel B. appeared on the horizon.

Of the old signallers, Toc P., Lizz L., Ack E., Rex F., Ron C., Eric W., Cipher S., Bert S., and Eric S. were seen on parade. Some looked prosperous and others not so good. But they were as one with their laughter and expressions of greeting. Stan. E. was also there and Dab F.'s hair looked as black and curly as ever. Wes O. and his "emma gees;" Les W. and his boys of the band; ex-officers and other ranks from the four companies—all shaking hands.

"Who wants a ticket for the luncheon?" bawled committeemen.

"How much?" asked one in a thread-bare coat.

"A dollar. Can't you do it? Well, here's a buckshee card."

The "buckshee cards" were tickets donated by members unable to attend the luncheon. "For one of the boys who can't raise the wind..." as one of them wrote. At the moment he was probably lying back on his bed in the T.B. home with ear phones bringing him something of the atmosphere, memories filling in the gaps.

And there were others. One, who had begrudged paying ten bob for a set of miniature medals, spent a Bound on tickets for his less fortunate cobbers...

The 30th Battalion (A.M.F.) colour party arrives. Their gleaming bayonets guard the regimental colours and guidon won by the 30th A.I.F. As the colours come into position, old soldiers cease talking and, bareheaded, stand at attention.

The 30th Battalion (A.M.F.) pipe band has now taken up position. The 673 ex-members of the old battalion stand, in column of twelves, ready to march. Colonels Fred S. and Tod S. are at their head. And Geoff C., D.C.M., secretary of the Battalion Club at Newcastle, has the banner aloft.

The band strikes up. The battalion moves off. Old soldiers march again. Along Macquarie Street the cheering populace greets them. But in Martin Place there is only the sound of marching feet to the tap-tap-tap of a side-drum, as, with hats held over hearts, they divide into two columns and turn their dimmed eyes in salute towards the Cenotaph.



On through the streets they march, living and feeling again—Diggers. Sixty thousand of them—one for each of those sixty thousand Australians sleeping Over There.

The last of the long column has wheeled into a "rising sun" formation in the Domain—a rising sun of sixty thousand veterans set in a sky of one hundred thousand of their people. As the clear voice of their president rings out, the thunder of their greetings and conversations ceases, and the service has commenced.

Army chaplains conduct the service. There are hymns. There are prayers for the continuance of Peace. A chaplain speaks:

"...The A.I.F. has a soul of its own, and even among the difficult days of peace we still are one and indivisible...Many have come long distances to shake the hands of the men with whom they went to the war, and whom they learnt to love. That brotherhood was not ready-made...We honoured our Allies; we honoured our enemies for their courage and patriotism. This mutual respect and understanding is what is needed in the world to-day..."

The music of Chopin's "Funeral March" swells out over the reverent gathering, and the deep silence which follows the majestic last notes of the March is broken by the sounding of the "Last Post." As the silvery voiced trumpets sound the resurrectional notes of "Reveille...flags which have been drawn down, rise again to the peak. Massed bands play the National Anthem, and on the note of a single "G" the parade dismisses.

Tribute has been paid. Fallen comrades have been honoured. And, as in the past—when Diggers had erected a rough wooden cross to mark the last resting place of some beloved cobbler, and made their way to the *estaminet* and carried on—so these sixty thousand Diggers went to their respective rendezvous. It was as their absent comrades would wish.

Out of the teeming thousands came the remnants of the 30th Battalion to have their photograph taken with the A.M.F. colour party and band on the steps of the National Art Gallery. After this they marched to the Customs House in lighter vein, punctuating the band numbers with old

marching songs. And when, with due ceremony, the colours were paraded, cased, and marched off, the old battalion was dismissed to advance independently on the luncheon room objective.

And now let us take leave of the veterans at their annual reunion. It is July, the twentieth anniversary of the 19th of July, 1915, the day when Ted and many of his colleagues became soldiers. The reunion has been opened with the toast of "The King." The boys are warming up to the occasion. "Do you remember —?" are words that are heard on every hand—it might be the password of the evening.

The president rises from the chair. "Gentlemen! I ask you to stand, the toast is 'Fallen Comrades.'" There is complete silence. Heads are bowed. The lights gradually fade and complete darkness comes with the final note of the "Last Post." "At the going down of the sun and in the morning we will remember them...the president recites. "We will remember them...comes the firm and heartfelt answer of the gathering; and, as Les W. brings the meeting back to the strains of "Reveille...the lights gradually come on and the remnants of the old battalion—carry on.

### **End of *There and Back***

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**A contemporary review, by F. M. Cutlack, of *There and Back*, by Rowland Edward Lording writing as A. Tiveychoc.**

[The Sydney Morning Herald, 23 Nov 1935, page 13.](#)

"There and Back," by "A. Tiveychoc," is more than a young Australian soldier's story of the A.I.F., in which he served. The author enlisted in June, 1915, on the day when he was 16 years old. He first went into action in France with his

battalion (the 30th) on July 10, 1916. He survived mishap for nine days. On July 19 he was knocked out by a burst of German machine-gun fire at close quarters in the misguided attack of Fromelles. Thereafter, he was in hospital for some four years, but he left it only to return constantly. By 1928 he had undergone his fifty-second surgical operation. His real war was his sixteen-year fight for life against a chest wound, and its effects, which ought to have been fatal, and against addiction to morphia, which his sufferings engendered.

It is an intensely personal story throughout, and there is a wealth of significance in the title the plucky author of it has chosen. His pen-name holds a touch of flippancy, characteristic enough of the man himself, but it will require explanation to civilians, unversed as they still remain in the intimacies of the A.I.F. The 30th Battalion was a unit of the 8th Infantry Brigade, which, with the 14th and 15th Brigades, formed the infantry of the 5th Australian Division. The commanding officer of the 8th Brigade was Brigadier-General Tivey, in civil life a Melbourne stockbroker, in the A.I.F. renowned for his solicitude for his men's welfare and comfort. During the training period in Egypt, the 5th Division was upon a famous occasion moved from Tel-el-Kebir in the desert to Ferry's Post on the Canal. The 14th and 15th Brigades marched—as stern a two days' trial under that desert sun as raw troops ever faced, and the casualties were severe. The 8th Brigade moved by train. Ever afterwards it was known throughout the division and afterwards in the A.I.F. as "Tivey's Chocolate Soldiers," or, more curtly as

"Tivey's Chocs." It is true to that habit of humorous cynicism in the Australian soldier that Mr. Rowland E. Lording, who begins his story in the third person, with his real name as though a biographer were telling it, should present this unvarnished narrative of fortitude under cruel suffering as the record of "A. Tiveychoc."

The tale of the training period in Egypt is the familiar one of many other Australian soldiers' accounts. They were, one and all, "tourists" in their own regard until they developed, by imperceptible degrees, into collective efficiency as soldiers. The growth was marked by the rise of esprit de corps in the new battalions. Therein first a great comradeship and later an intense pride in battle performance made a wonderful cement. No hardship ever broke it. No forlorn hope ever defeated the shining courage, indomitable resolution, and natural co-operation in mutual assistance, fruits of a magnificent belief in their superiority, which made the enemy regard the Australian divisions as some of their most terrible opponents. The manner in which this supreme confidence in themselves spread through the Australian force defies analysis. It became an infection as well as a creed and a standard of conduct. This book exemplifies it in a new aspect. Lording was only a lad when he was knocked out, at a stage in the war when the Australian divisions had their reputation in France entirely to make; but the same spirit which arose to build up the A.I.F.'s battle discipline on the Western Front glows unmistakably in this youngster's fight, a long and lonely fight, for life in hospital.

The full extent of Ted's injuries has been revealed (in the field hospital) under the anaesthetic: gunshot wounds in left chest, consisting of a small hole just below the neck and a large cavity four inches in diameter on the left side (caused by a machine gun,) as a result of which the left lung has been shattered, and the small piece left is totally collapsed, while his heart has moved, and can be seen through the hole. The right arm is smashed through the elbow; in his back are four small shrapnel wounds, one having partially paralysed the spine.

There were dally operations for a while. Once four inches of rib were removed without an anaesthetic—chest conditions too bad to permit of its being administered. Twice a day he was turned on to his side to empty the cavity of pus, "which sometimes amounted to as much as a kidney-dish full." He survived the agonising pain of tetanus. He had to be forcibly fed. He had others' blood injected into his veins to keep him alive. The wound healed in a fashion, but in England it had to be opened again, the left wall of the chest incised and drawn back while portions of six ribs were removed. For weeks this broken chest was "irrigated" from rubber tubes—"like a blanky Murrumbidgee irrigation farm"—some of them draining the wounds, others injecting glycerine. Lording's bottle of ribs, kept defiantly on top of his hospital locker, steadily filled, and he insisted on the nurse's dusting it each day. Then hospital ship to Australia, then more operations at Randwick, discharge, the addiction to morphia, struggle to earn a living, back to hospital (Prince Alfred's), more operations, and then the great fight to

overcome the drug habit, success, study to become an accountant; again in 1932 back to Randwick, where for weeks he hovered on the border of death, recovery, out into the world again to make his living, and finally qualification in the profession he had chosen. In the intervals of this later struggle he married and became the father of three children.

This is a revelation of gallantry unsurpassed. To extol it, or to attempt to describe it, after a reading of the author's own simple story, would be an excess. Mr. Lording's own modest account is the finest possible conveyance of it.

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**THE END**



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